

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH

CAUSES AND CURES

Editor
Kharak Singh

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INTRODUCTION

Dr Kharak Singh

WHAT IS APOSTASY ?

The dictionary meaning of the word 'apostasy' is 'abandonment of one's religion, principles or party' or 'a revolt from ecclesiastical obedience, religious profession or holy order'. (*Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*). The Punjabi University Textbook Board as well as the Punjabi University, Patiala, in the English to Punjabi dictionary, endorse this definition and describe apostasy as 'ਧਰਮ ਤਿਆਗ', 'ਧਰਮ ਵਿਮੁਖਤਾ', 'ਪੱਖ ਤਿਆਗ', 'ਮੱਤ ਤਿਆਗ' .।

In the Punjabi to English version of the dictionary of the Punjabi University, the word *patit* (ਪਤਿਤ) used for 'apostate' is explained as 'fallen (in moral or religious sense)', 'a sinner', 'degraded'. The Punjabi Language Department in its *Punjabi Kosh* refers to *patit* (ਪਤਿਤ) as 'ਡਿਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ', 'ਪਾਪੀ', 'ਨੀਚ', 'ਧਰਮ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਡਿਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ' ।

Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, in his *Mahan Kosh*, describes *patit* (ਪਤਿਤ) as 'ਧਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਡਿਗਿਆ', 'ਜਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਡਿਗਿਆ', 'ਸਮਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਰਜ (ਕਢਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ)', which also means one who has fallen from or lost his status/position in class or society, or one who has been ostracised or excommunicated from his society.

While the above definition is common to most of the religious systems, in Sikhism the term apostasy has some additional specific connotations. Bhai Kahn Singh writes in *Gurmat Martand* :

“ਜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਨ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਅਰਥਾਤ ਡਿਗ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤ ਸੱਦੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚਾਰ ਤਨਖਾਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ । ਪਤਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਾਕੇ ਸ਼ੁਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ” ।

One, who has fallen from his status, is called an apostate. However, according to the Khalsa concept, it specifically refers to one guilty of any of the following four additional violations.

ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ - Tampering with hair.

ਤਮਾਕੂ ਵਰਤਣਾ - Use of tobacco.

ਮੁਸਲੀ ਸੇ ਭੋਗ ਕਰਨਾ - Adultery with *musli* (women of the enemy).

ਕੁਠਾ ਖਾਣਾ - Eating meat of animals butchered in the *halal* fashion.

It is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss the merit of these taboos or restrictions. It is necessary to point out, however, that this small list is by no means exhaustive. It is illustrative and includes only such items, as, on prevailing values or standards, were not considered serious offences. Sikh ethics aim at perfection of human conduct and morality, and would not condone even a minor violation.

Tampering with hair (shaving or trimming) is on the top of this list of *kurahits* that constitute apostasy. Human hair is clearly a biological necessity and has played a crucial role in the evolution of man. It is closely linked with culture and spirituality. Human hair is as much an organ of the body as fingers or toes, and performs vital functions which are obvious as well as those not fully understood. In Sikhism, unshorn hair not only signifies a respect for the natural form given by the Creator, but also a commitment to the high ideals and the way of life prescribed by the Gurus. It is a gift of God sanctified by the Guru. Tampering with hair is an index of erosion of faith in the Guru and the Almighty, which is nothing but a fall or apostasy.

Unshorn hair is not the only or the most difficult requirement of the Sikh way of life. It is perhaps the easiest and only a preliminary condition. Without respect for and faith in this symbol, nobody can be expected to fulfil the higher and much more difficult demands of the Sikh *Rahit*. By prescribing hair as a compulsory requirement, the Guru has provided a built-in mechanism to warn against dwindling of faith, like the red light to show the minimum level of fuel required to keep an engine running.

In Sikhism, therefore, apostasy means abandonment of faith in the basic tenets of Sikhism. The four *kurahits* are only specific illustrations of act of apostasy. This abandonment may be total or partial. In the former case, one ceases to be a Sikh, and hardly merits discussion. It is the latter category that needs to be understood. This category sees no harm in shaving, trimming beard, drinking and smoking. They may sometime recite *Japuji*, and occasionally go to gurdwara, which is considered enough to qualify as a Sikh. They insist that they be accepted as such, and demand active participation in the management of gurdwaras and other religious organisations. It must also be noted that they do not want to be associated with any other religion. It is obvious that they still cherish the basic values of Sikhism, and do not want to detach themselves from the Gurus in whom they usually take pride. Some of the 'arguments' commonly advanced by this group in defence of their clean-shaven status may be reproduced below :

1. "KESHADHARIS TELL LIES, CHEAT, AND INDULGE IN UN-ETHICAL CONDUCT. THEREFORE, IT IS BETTER TO STAY CLEAN-SHAVEN." This argument assumes that unethical conduct is linked with *keshas*, that all *keshdharis* lack ethical values, and that all clean-shaven persons observe high ethical standards. These assumptions are indeed preposterous and unsustainable. The *keshas* and the external Sikh form are a reminder of one's commitment to highest moral conduct. On the other hand, dispensing with *keshas* is an announcement of one's disregard for the moral values that go with the Sikh way of life. The argument also assumes that in Sikhism there is a choice between the *keshdhari* form and the clean-shaven style, as well as between ethical conduct and an unethical way of life. There is no such choice. Sikh *Rahit* lays equal emphasis on both internal *Rahit* as well as external form. One without the other is imperfect and unacceptable. So why compare two imperfect situations? Why not strive for perfection?
2. "RESTRICTION ON SHAVING WAS IMPOSED BY GURU GOBIND SINGH AT THE TIME OF CREATION OF THE KHALSA; THE EARLIER GURUS HAD ALLOWED IT." This is historically incorrect. It is on record that Guru Nanak gave, *inter alia*, the following specific instructions to Bhai Mardana, when the latter went on a missionary tour :
 - a) Never cut your hair.
 - b) Do not smoke.

The word *Khalsa* is also not an innovation of Guru Gobind Singh. It finds mention in the *Adi Granth Sahib* compiled by Guru Arjun Dev.

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਨ ਭਏ ਖਾਲਸੇ, ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਨੀ

G.G.S., p. 655

Also, Guru Gobind Singh used the word *Khalsa*, when he abolished the *masand* system and vested the authority in the *sangat*, as testified by Bhai Gurdas Singh : 'ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤ ਕੀਨੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ' ।। This was several years before the Guru selected the *Panj Piaras* and initiated them with *amrit*. It is obvious that all the Gurus and their Sikhs sported unshorn hair. Guru Gobind Singh codified it and included its violation in the four *kurahits* to underline its importance. This is a stern warning by the Guru against the weakness inflicting the present day youth. Obviously, the Guru, in his infinite wisdom, foresaw this and gave a special status to hair by including it among the five *kakar* also. Bhai Nand Lal says :

ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਿ ਸਿਖੀ ਈਂ ਪੰਜ ਕਾਫ਼,
ਹਰਗਿਜ਼ ਨਾ ਖਾਸ਼ੰਦ ਈਂ ਪੰਜ ਮੁਆਫ਼।

ਕੜਾ, ਕਾਰਦੇ, ਕਛ਼, ਕੰਘਾ, ਬਦਾਂ,
ਬਿਲਾ ਕੇਸ ਹੋਚ ਅੰਦ ਜੁਮਲਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਂ ।

"These are the indispensable five symbols of the Guru's Sikhs : *kara* (steel hangle), *kirpan* (dagger), *kachh* (breeches), *kangha* (comb). Without *kesh* (*unshorn hair*), however, the other symbols are meaningless."

It is obvious that hair occupies a crucial position in the Sikh discipline. The requirement applies to all followers of the Guru, or whoever calls himself a Sikh, before as well as after the *amrit* ceremony.

3. "JUST AS THE LENGTH OF THE KIRPAN HAS BEEN REDUCED FROM 3 FEET TO 9-12 INCHES OR A TINY SYMBOL FIXED ON A COMB, THE LENGTH OF HAIR CAN ALSO BE REDUCED." It is surprising how far human imagination can go. The argument cannot be taken seriously (or is untenable), since it is based on wrong assumptions. The size of the *kirpan* for constant wear was 9-12 inches from the very beginning, and is a must to face a surprise attack. The long *kirpan* is meant for an anticipated or a planned battle. The symbolic '*kirpan*' fixed to a comb is no *kirpan* and is not acceptable. Further, hair is a part of the body, and cannot be compared to an external outfit.
4. "WITH TURBAN AND HAIR, ONE CAN BE CONFUSED WITH ARABS OR IRANIAN FOLLOWERS OF AYATULLAH KHOMEINI." This is an imaginary disadvantage, since Arabs and Iranians are as respectable as any other group of people in the world. On the other hand, if one shaves, he will surely be taken for a Christian, Muslim or Hindu, and never a Sikh; his loss of Sikh identity is certain. The right thing for the Sikhs is to preserve their identity, and to show to the world, through their conduct, that their external form represents the highest moral and ethical ideals; and not to shave and get lost in the crowd. Sikhism is a universal world religion that incorporates eternal spiritual values, and advocates a worldview that will exactly meet the requirements of man for all times. This needs to be propagated and shared with others. Without it, the world would be poorer, and will not evolve or progress.
5. "CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO THE 'HARDSHIP' OF KEEPING UNSHORN HAIR. THEY CAN TAKE THEIR OWN DECISION WHEN THEY GROW UP." The argument is hollow. Hair is no hardship. It grows naturally and the child adjusts to it without effort. It is a part of the body and represents its growth, and its mutilation can never be conducive to a child's development. Upbringing

of children is a responsibility of the parents. They are invariably brought up in the particular way prescribed by their religion. It would be highly unfair to the child to deprive it of religious discipline. Such neglect would not only be detrimental to the child's mental and moral health, but will also lead to serious problems for human society. Some parents argue that they have no right to decide about the religion of their children. In this pseudo-liberalism they forget that they also do not have the right to cut the child's hair. Also parents feed and clothe their child in a manner they consider best for him. They do not wait until the child grows up to decide what he will eat, and how he will dress. Similarly, they owe it to the child to bequeath their spiritual heritage, educate him in its philosophy and train him in the prescribed discipline. When the child grows up, he can surely review the choice of his parents. But the latter have certainly no right to prejudice the child against his own religion.

6. "CLEAN-SHAVEN BOYS AND MEN LOOK SMART." This impression is ill-founded. It is preposterous to suggest that most of the great men of our history, and our prophets who invariably sported a beard and hair, were in any way less smart on that account. Such thinking is the result of an unwarranted inferiority complex a minority is likely to suffer from in a vast majority of another culture. Numbers do not decide the superiority or otherwise of a culture or a practice. It is always not the best thing to conform to a prevailing vogue. Hair and beard have not been added by nature to make a man look ugly or shabby. These are secondary sex characters in male and are intended to add beauty, as is the case with most other species of animals. As a universal rule, these additional characters make the male more attractive. Also, as Keats said, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." The impression that without a shave one looks less smart is very subjective and has no relationship with reality. This inferiority complex needs to be shed. It is understandable when women feel embarrassed if they grow a beard. On that account, it is surprising why men do not feel embarrassed going around with shaven faces !
7. "WE HAVE BECOME SEHAJDHARIS OR SIKHS OF THE FIRST NINE GURUS." The plea is common among those who shave, and want to justify their action. It must be understood that *sehajdhari* by definition means a slow adopter. It means a non-Sikh who is attracted to the Sikh faith and is on the way to its adoption. He becomes a full-fledged *keshadhari* Sikh sooner than later, and brings up his children as *keshadharis*. *Sehajdhari* represents a temporary stage. It is not a static or permanent way of life. It is a movement from a non-Sikh to Sikh faith. *Sehajdhari* is not a variety of Sikhism to be practised on a permanent basis. Thus, its

essential features are its transitory nature and its direction.

Thus, if a *keshadhari* Sikh shaves himself or his children, he cannot claim the *sehajdhari* status. It is a fall, since his direction is reversed. Instead of slowly adopting Sikhism, he is discarding it. He is a deserter. Similarly, the claim of a clean-shaven man to the discipleship of the first nine Gurus is untenable. For, all Gurus represent one spirit and one teaching. Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru, introduced no innovations or change in the thought of the earlier Gurus. He simply codified certain aspects of the discipline. The theme 'ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕੈ ਸਬਦ ਵੀਚਾਰ' has been dealt with by us on a number of occasions, and need not be elaborated here again. Distinction or discriminations between the Tenth and other Gurus is arbitrary, and denotes a lack of faith. Hence, the expectation that one who has deserted the Tenth Guru, is acceptable to the former Gurus, is far-fetched indeed.

From the foregoing discussion, what constitutes apostasy in Sikhism should be quite clear. Any major violation of *Gurmata* or the Gurus' way is apostasy. Guru Gobind Singh has specifically listed the four *kurahits* that amount to apostasy. Tampering with hair is one among them, and since hair is the most visible symbol in Sikh religion, and is synonymous with Sikh personality or identity, its violation is doubtless apostasy, the various excuses discussed earlier notwithstanding.

INCIDENCE OF APOSTASY AMONG SIKHS

The problem of apostasy is common to all religions, and the Sikh religion is no exception. In the West, a large number of churches have been closed and sold out for other purposes for want of worshippers. The attendance in religious places is dwindling. Among Sikhs, however, the existence of apostasy cannot be concealed when one cuts his hair. Relying on this indicator, it would appear that the problem of apostasy is widespread. Young men with trimmed beards is a common sight. Even in Sikh educational institutions which are supposed to preach the ideal Sikh way of life, students with a full beard are few and far between. Girls are also not unaffected, although the malady is relatively less visible. In the matrimonial columns of newspapers, the unashamed demand for 'clean-shaven Sikh' is a daily observation.

Apostasy is not confined to youth alone. Elders are no better in this respect. In fact, it would be correct to say that youth is only following the role model provided by elders in their homes and society at large. Trimming a

beard has become a fashion. Even some highly placed bureaucrats, holding senior positions, have no qualms over loss of Sikh form.

Geographically the problem has global dimensions. There is hardly any area free from apostasy. Rural areas are as badly affected as the towns. Before 1984, this form of apostasy appeared to be much higher abroad as compared to India. During the recent years, the trend seems to have been reversed. A large number of once 'clean-shaven' Sikhs abroad have returned to their original Sikh form. In India, however, apostasy seems to have increased visibly.

It would indeed be desirable to make an accurate assessment of the problem through a survey in different sections of the Sikh society in India as well as abroad. Such a suggestion was mooted by Surinder Singh, one of the participants in the Seminar. In fact, such surveys should be conducted at regular intervals to find out the trends, especially in educational institutions, particularly high schools and colleges. This is necessary to know the effect of the environment available in the institutions.

The present absence of a quantitative assessment, however, need not hold us from taking any remedial measures. The problem is obvious and serious, and demands action without delay.

CAUSES

A host of reasons could be listed for the present trend towards apostasy. Some of these are discussed in the following paragraphs.

1. **ENVIRONMENT** : Human thought is influenced by the environment prevailing in one's home, educational institution (schools and colleges), religious centres (gurdwaras in case of Sikhs), society in general and the dominant media of information. Unfortunately, the environment is far from conducive for Sikh religion.

Homes : In most of the Sikh homes, the Sikh way of life is often neglected. Most parents have forgotten their responsibility towards their children in this respect. Parents are the role model for the children. Children learn what they see their parents doing. A father who returns home late, drunk, who never recites the *Nit Nem*, who trims his beard or is clean-shaven, and a mother who is busy with her own make-up and kitty parties, and is completely ignorant of her religion, cannot be expected to inspire Sikh spirit into their children. Earlier, when joint family was the rule, grandparents, uncles and relatives also had some influence on the development of the child's mind. This influence is no more a significant factor, since with industrialisation, a nucleus conjugal family has become

the rule, particularly in the Western countries. Thus, in the homes, children do not learn anything about Sikh religion, since their parents themselves are ignorant, and do not practise the Sikh discipline. Frequently, they themselves take their children to the barber for a shave, since the mother has not the time to comb the hair of children. They even feel that hair cut gives their children a smart look. Sometimes they invent funny excuses for their detestable decision. An average Sikh home has hardly any Sikh literature in the house. There are some Sikh religious journals, but their circulation is nominal, because religious literature is the last priority with most of our people.

Educational Institutions : After the home, schools and colleges have a dominant role in moulding the character and personality of a child, and determine his attitude towards religion. Sikhs built in the state of Punjab, hundreds of Khalsa schools, dozens of colleges and seats of higher learning in the hope that these would impart learning in Sikhism and turn out committed Sikhs that would be a model to follow. While some schools and colleges did commendable work in earlier stages, most of these are fast degenerating into centres of apostasy. Their management has fallen into indifferent hands, while teachers show little concern for imparting religious instruction, and are poor models for their pupils to follow. Frequently, the teachers are communists and they openly preach their anti-Sikhism views. As such, far from learning the Sikh way of life, it is extremely difficult for a Sikh child to retain the Sikh external form, particularly in colleges. There is hardly any school or college, where the management or the staff enforce the Sikh discipline. There are few qualified teachers to teach the Sikh religion; libraries are poorly stocked with Sikh literature, and hardly any functions are held to celebrate religious occasions in Sikh schools or colleges.

Gurdwaras : While the number of gurdwaras has increased during the recent decades, the real functions expected from these places is being forgotten. Their activities do not go beyond routine services in the morning and evening, or occasional *langars* or *kirtan darbars*, which some selected people enjoy, and which fill the pockets of a few selected *ragis*, but give no message to the people. Management of the gurdwaras is in the hands of ambitious people, who seldom have an understanding of Sikh religion. Most gurdwaras have become a bone of contention, with a number of them running to courts for settling their disputes. As a result, young boys and girls do not visit the gurdwaras, so that their very purpose is lost.

Media : With the dominance of TV and films, the media most of the time, project cheap entertainment, and indirectly glorify crime, violence, sex, etc. Teaching of religious values has no place. India is no exception, where in spite of professions of secularism, the various central and regional channels are never wary of programmes of the dominant culture to the exclusion of minority religions and culture.

2. **STATE POLICY** : Throughout history, state policy has had a deciding influence on religion of the people. In medieval Europe, the religion of the ruler was the religion of his subjects. If he converted to a new faith, people followed. Islam has largely spread through state conquests. In India, Sikhism had to face the wrath of rulers in authority during the Mughal period. Two of our Gurus and thousands of their followers became martyrs, because the rulers did not approve of the new faith. During the reign of Bahadur Shah and Farukh Siyar, the Sikhs were outlawed, and killing of a Sikh was handsomely rewarded. The regional governors followed the state policy zealously, killing Sikhs on sight and forcing them to flee. There were official pronouncements to the effect that the Sikhs had been completely liquidated. Historical estimates say that once only 2,000 Sikhs had been left in the jungles of Kahnawan or deserts of Bikaner. Nowhere else was there a Sikh to be seen.

Later, when the tide turned, the number of Sikhs swelled during the Sikh Rule. It dwindled again with the fall of the Sikh Empire and annexation of the Punjab by the British. The influence of the State authority was demonstrated recently in 1984, when repression was let loose with the connivance of the people in authority, killing thousands of Sikhs in Delhi and other major towns of India. Only lucky ones survived the onslaught of the organised liquidation squads operating under state patronage. Hundreds of thousands shaved off to conceal their Sikh identity. In the Punjab, hundreds of thousands have been tortured and killed in fake encounters. All *amritdhari* Sikhs were declared virtually criminals and were hounded out as enemies. Relentless propaganda campaigns were launched against Sikhs internationally depicting them as criminals, terrorists and villains of secession. This had its inevitable toll, and due to the feeling of insecurity, thousands were forced to shave, and thus lost their identity.

Apart from the above crude and violent measures, the state has other subtle means at its disposal. For example, a policy of the so-called 'secular' education, which dispenses with religious instruction in schools and colleges, is enough to kill all minority religions, while it can have little

or no effect on the dominant religion. Discrimination in services, overt or covert, in recruitment and promotion, service conditions, reservation in Defence Services on basis of regional population, control of higher education through the University Grant Commission, appointment of vice-chancellors of Universities, professors, etc., and school education through NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Technology), which prescribes textbooks full of distortion of Sikh history serve the same end and promote apostasy among Sikhs. Dr M.S. Rahi recently filed a writ petition, which was accepted by the Punjab and Haryana High Court, against blatantly false and derogatory account of Guru Gobind Singh's life in a History textbook prescribed for Senior Secondary schools.

3. **OPPORTUNISM** : While real committed Sikhs never deserted their religion and embraced martyrdom willingly, there are much larger numbers who adopt a religion to enjoy some worldly benefits or political or economic advantages. These are the opportunist elements who swell the number of a religion in authority. They are also the first to relinquish a faith, when the advantage is no more. Their commitment is only to their own interest. This is amply demonstrated by history. In the eighteenth century, when the Sikhs were only a committed lot, there were no apostates among them. Later, when the Sikhs came to power, hundreds of thousands adopted the Sikh form. When the British came to power, most of them turned their loyalty to new masters, and the Sikh population decreased. The same phenomenon has been observed after the Partition with Hindu domination since 1947.
4. **MODERNISM** : Some of the basic postulates, held by earlier religions, are difficult to sustain in the light of recent discoveries made by science. Sikhism, however, as pointed out by Dr Muthu Mohan, has no such disadvantage, since the Gurus lay stress on universal and eternal truths. There may be some misunderstanding on the external Sikh form marked by unshorn hair and beard. Shaving is erroneously regarded as a symbol of modernism in some quarters. It is, however, no more than a passing fad. More and more scientific evidence is coming up, which shows that human hair is a biological necessity, and that tampering with it is unnatural, unscientific and harmful. A beard is, in fact, a male attraction, and to look at it in any other way is a perversion and sign of inferiority complex. A healthy mind should get rid of this complex and take genuine pride in this wonderful gift of nature.

PREVENTION AND CURE

Apostasy among Sikhs is indeed a serious problem. That it is increas-

ing makes it more so, and demands preventive measures. Those who have already become a victim to it and have dropped their insignia, need to be brought back. While apostasy is to be deplored, it does not help to condemn its victims, who need our sympathy and attention, for they are the flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. Our approach has to be based on love and understanding.

We have listed in the foregoing paragraphs a number of causes that lead to apostasy. But if we look carefully, the cause of all causes is ignorance. In the eighteenth century, the Sikhs understood the message of the Gurus, and they would willingly die for their faith. They were proud to be Sikhs and to maintain its identity. Banda Singh Bahadur and his over 700 soldiers chose to be tortured and beheaded rather than give up their religion. Bhai Mani Singh preferred to be cut limb by limb in defence of his faith. Bhai Taru Singh's scalp was removed, for he would not agree to shave off his hair. They were completely committed to the Sikh ideals, and considered no sacrifice too great in defence of its symbols. Apostasy was unthinkable.

Today, however, such commitment and understanding are rare. The problem is the widespread ignorance. This has been aggravated by vicious propaganda, distortion of Sikh history and misrepresentation of Sikhism by its adversaries. The only solution, therefore, is education on a mass scale. This treatment was tried successfully at the end of the nineteenth century in a similar situation by the Singh Sabha movement. They launched a mass campaign of education in towns and villages, started Khalsa schools and colleges, and made extensive use of press media, which had freshly become available.

Those Khalsa schools and colleges still exist and countless more have been added. They have, however, passed into indifferent and even hostile hands. No religious education, theoretical or practical, is imparted in these institutions. The managements are indifferent, and enemies of Sikhism have infiltrated among teachers to preach atheism and Marxism to vulnerable minds of young pupils.

Parents have neglected the religious aspect of education of their children, because they themselves are ignorant. Our leaders are too much occupied with selfish politics. Although they are never tired of claiming that religion and politics are inseparable in Sikhism, in actual practice they have completely given up religion and are following politics alone. They need to add a bit of religion or morality to their politics. This would demand that interest of the people or the *Panth* be kept above their personal interest.

Several steps have been suggested by scholars in the papers presented in this Seminar. None of these can bring about tangible results singly. All these measures have to be adopted as a package. A mass campaign is required for quick results, in which all the responsible elements in the *Panth* should participate. Fortunately, on the initiative of the Institute of Sikh Studies, some leading organisations of Sikhs have issued a joint appeal to this effect (See Appendix) under the *Gurmata Chetna Lehar*. A number of steps have been taken, and a series of camps in schools and colleges have been started with encouraging results. This movement has been rightly dedicated to the 300th Birth Anniversary of the Khalsa, which falls on Vaisakhi of 1999 CE. For success of this Movement, some suggestions may be listed :

1. The movement should be organised and controlled by a central authority. Instead of raising a new organisation, the existing S.G.P.C., which is frequently referred to as Parliament of Sikhs, should accept this responsibility. All other *Panthic* organisations, like the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Institute of Sikh Studies, Damdami Taksal, Sant Samaj, Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, etc., should co-operate and extend active participation to the Movement. Even political parties like the Shiromani Akali Dal, that claim to represent the Sikh Community, should join this programme. In fact, no Sikh organisation, big or small, should lag behind. The various missionary organisations, local gurdwara managements and Singh Sabhas or *sangats* can play vital roles in the Movement. The large number of *deras* which exist in the Punjab and outside, and have a considerable following, should also come forward in this hour of crisis and make their contribution.
2. The campaign can best be run under the Akal Takht. The *Jathedar* may be assisted by a small advisory/steering committee, and provided with required facilities, financial, physical and personnel. It is heartening to note that the present *Jathedar*, Singh Sahib Bhai Ranjit Singh, has not only blessed the campaign, but is keen to carry it out.
3. The *Jathedars* of the other four Takhts, who should be on the central advisory/steering committee, should be in charge of the programmes in their respective areas (to be defined). They should, in turn, organise District Committees in each district with elected members of S.G.P.C. in the district, besides some other prominent Sikhs and local heads of Sikh institutions.
4. While this organisational set-up needs to be completed immediately, the various activities should be planned in a time framework, so that desired results could be achieved by the Vaisakhi of 1999. The goal is to reverse

the present trend towards apostasy through awareness of *Gurmat* and inculcate a genuine pride in external Sikh identity and its *Rahit* among the Sikh masses.

5. The programme should include intensive camps (preferably overnight) in all Khalsa schools and colleges for orientation of young boys and girls. A detailed Manual has been prepared by the Institute of Sikh Studies in behalf of the S.G.P.C., and could be used for this purpose by organisers and participants of camps. Managements and Staff of Schools and Colleges should be actively involved in these camps. Similar camps/congregations need to be organised for youth and even elders outside schools and colleges to cover the entire population. Parents should be exhorted to adopt the Sikh way of life themselves and to provide a Sikh environment in their homes for their children. Regional Camps and mass rallies would be necessary to impart the character of a mass movement to the programme. Processions, *Nagar Kirtans*, special *diwans* and use of appropriate banners could be of great help.
6. Every school should have atleast one qualified Divinity teacher for *Gurmat* in proper grade of pay. Periods for the subject should be provided in the regular time table for each class. A uniform syllabus should be prepared and prescribed for each class for instruction in *Gurbani*, Sikh history and philosophy. Suitable textbooks should be prescribed. Each Sikh school/college should have a library well stocked with Sikh literature. Students in every Sikh school/college should organise a society working under the guidance of staff to carry out religious functions and *sewa* in the Sikh tradition.
7. Every Sikh school/college must enforce Sikh *Rahit* and insist on a uniform with turban and unshorn hair, which should be compulsory for admission as well as for staying in the institution.
8. Sikh scholars should come forward and prepare textbooks for religious instruction and provide material on Sikhism to bring about mass awareness on merits of the great Sikh heritage.
9. Press should pay special attention to coverage of the Movement and publish special articles on Sikhism.
10. Special programmes are necessary to cover the Sikh population abroad on similar lines.
11. Electronic media, which is now spreading apostasy, could be harnessed to serve the cause of *Gurmat Chetna Lehar*. Children, and even adults, cannot be weaned away from radio, T.V. or films. It is necessary, there-

forc, to prepare films and other audio-visual material on Sikhism to be telecast. This is a highly specialised job, and a committee of experts should be set up for this purpose. S.G.P.C. is the right body to undertake this work.

12. Computer network is the quickest way to disseminate information. We cannot afford to ignore it, if we want to march with time. A special committee is necessary for exploiting this avenue also.
13. The tide of apostasy can only be stemmed with a mass movement. Every Sikh, in India or abroad, should join this movement, contributing thought, physical effort and money.
14. There is an acute shortage of trained cadres for missionary work, teachers for divinity, *granthis*, *ragis* and *dhadis*. Existing missionary college should be strengthened, and more centres should be set up to meet the demands of the *Lehar* on a long term basis.

The present volume is an anthology of papers presented by well-known scholars in the Seminar held on 26th and 27th October, 1996 at Chandigarh on the theme *Apostasy among Sikh Youth — Causes and Cures*. The Seminar itself was organised as a part of the *Gurmata Chetna Lehar* to focus the attention of scholars and the public on this most urgent issue to be tackled. The overwhelming response from top thinkers of the Sikh community shows their concern about mounting apostasy. The opening address of Justice R.S. Narula and the Keynote address of Sardar Saran Singh are very thought-provoking. Sardar Karnail Singh, Sardar Raminder Singh and Dr Sangat Singh present brilliant analysis of the problem. Sardar Narinder Singh has highlighted the challenges facing the Sikh community in Canada and other Western Countries. Sardar Kulraj Singh pleads for attention to youth to salvage our ethos. Dr Kirpal Singh, as a historian, blames opportunism as a major cause of apostasy. Sardar Bhagwant Singh Dalawari is very clear that youth is going away from religion because of the failure of elders to practice what they preach. Dr Muthumohan sees in Sikh philosophy no conflict with modernity. Dr M.S. Rahi has brought out a couple of cases of distortion of history to denigrate the Sikh faith and the Gurus in history textbooks prescribed by the NCERT in Senior Secondary Schools. Brig. Gurdip Singh and Col. Partap Singh show how service conditions in the Defence Services promote apostasy among Sikh officers and men. Ms Alice Basarke, in her analysis of the problem, has raised important questions on sanctity of marriage, abortion, contraception, genetic engineering, etc., that demand answers, and pleads for a 'governing body' to respond to such queries. The papers of Principal Surjit Singh, Brig. Hardit Singh, Sardar Surinder Singh,

Sardar Anurag Singh, Sardar Gur Fatha Singh, Sardar Gurbachan Singh, Sardar Nanak Singh Nishter and Sardar Santokh Singh bring out important aspects of the problem and offer valuable suggestions to deal with it.

While Ms Nav Kiran Pal Kaur provides a sociological perspective of apostasy, Dr Birendra Kaur has added an entirely new dimension to the requirement of unshorn hair in the Sikh *Rahit*. As a biologist, she claims that human hair is a biological necessity and a vital organ of the human body. Dr Sher Singh Sher has also provided a flood of encyclopaedic information on the role and functions of human hair.

The Punjabi section contains six well researched articles by eminent scholars. Dr Harnam Singh Shan, presents abundant material from Sikh history to inspire pride among Sikh youth over their rich heritage, and in his inimitable style strongly pleads that for a return to the *Rahit* or the way of life prescribed by the Gurus.

Dr Balkar Singh lists major elements of the Sikh *Rahit Maryada*, and explains that apostasy is not confined to tampering with human hair alone.

Dr Gurbakhsh Singh has in a thought provoking article referred to his experience among Sikhs abroad during the last 12 years, the response of Sikh emigrants to local environment, and the ups and downs suffered by the community in observance of Sikh *Rahit*. He believes that apostasy is very often the result of ignorance, which is easier to correct. There are, however, some clever people who do not hesitate to distort Sikh doctrines to justify their lack of faith. He decries the role of 'deras' which mislead innocent Sikhs to promote their selfish ends. By and large, however, it seems that while apostasy flourished in the 1970's, after 1984, a return to *Gurmata Rahit* is visible. Dr Darshanjot Kaur and Dr Sarbjot Kaur have in their papers explained the significance of external symbols and internal *Rahit* in Sikh religion, and exhorted the youth to have complete faith in *Gurbani*.

An article written by the great Sikh scholar, Late Bhai Ardaman Singh some time back, was received by us through the courtesy of his illustrious son, Bhai Sahib Ashok Singh Bagrian. This article is very relevant to the theme of apostasy, and is, therefore, included in this book.

Before I conclude, I must express my sincerest gratitude to all these scholars who attended the Seminar at their own expense and immensely contributed to the pool of thinking on the great challenge of apostasy today. I am also thankful to Col. Amrik Singh, Dr Birendra Kaur and Ms Sumit Kaur for their valuable suggestions and help in proofreading.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr Kuldip Singh*

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh. It is my privilege to welcome you all to this Seminar on the burning problem of rising Apostasy among Sikh Youth. I am happy that the foremost thinker of our *Panth*, Chief Justice Sardar Ranjit Singh (Retd.), is here to encourage us, to join our deliberations and, of course, to inaugurate this function.

Before I formally welcome the participants, I would like to draw your attention to two historical facts in order to put apostasy today in its right perspective. First is the exemplary way in which 740-780 Sikhs accepted execution along with Banda Singh Bahadur. The countenance of those brave Sikhs is described by an eyewitness in the following words as quoted by Khushwant Singh (*A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, pp. 115-116) from *Ibarat Namah* by Mirza Mohammad Harisi: "Those unfortunate Sikhs, who had been reduced to this last extremity, were quite happy and contented with their fate; not the slightest sign of dejection or humility was to be seen on their faces. In fact, most of them, as they passed along on their camels, seemed happy and cheerful, joyfully singing the sacred hymns of their Scripture. And if anyone from among those in the lanes and bazars called out to them that their own excesses had reduced them to that condition, they quickly retorted, saying that it had been so willed by the Almighty, and that their capture and misfortune were in accordance with His Will, and if any one said, 'Now you will be killed', they shouted, 'Kill us, when were we afraid of death.'" John Surman and Edward Stephenson from the East India Company, who were then in attendance at the Mughal Court, sent a detailed despatch describing the daily executions of 780 Sikhs. In it they mentioned, "It is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that even one apostatised from their new found religion" (J.T. Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, p. 180, quoted by Khushwant Singh in *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 116). Before execution, an offer was made to spare their lives, if they would become Musalman. None volunteered to do so. They uttered *Waheguru, Waheguru* and tried to outbid one another in offering themselves for sacrifice, saying "me — *mukta* (deliverer), kill me first." "They had no fear of death and they called the executioner, *mukta* or the deliverer". (C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal* 96-98,

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Irvine I, 317, quoted by H.R. Gupta, Vol. II, p. 32). All of you know the well-known episode of the young newly married lad whose mother and wife had obtained reprieve saying that he was not a Sikh. Khafi Khan, an eyewitness recorded in *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, p. 76, that the boy declined to be released saying, "My mother is a liar. I am heart and soul a devoted disciple of the Guru. Finish me quickly with my companions". Khushal Chand, another eyewitness, wrote that the lad declined to recognise his mother and wife saying, "I do not know whose mother she is, and from where she has brought this girl. I do not understand what she talks" (*Tarikh-e-Muhammad Shahi*, 247 b: Ganda Singh 224, quoted by H.R. Gupta, Vol. II, p. 33).

The second remarkable saga relates to events that took place between 1748-1753, when Mir Mannu was Subedar (Governor) of Lahore Province. He had let loose a vigorous and merciless campaign to exterminate the Sikhs. Prizes were offered for information, for effecting arrest and for bringing heads of Sikhs. As a result, no men were left in Sikh households. The Mughal forces would seize Sikh women and children and bring them before Mir Mannu. He subjected them to cruel and inhuman tortures in his jails. They were forced to grind heaps of wheat, but were given very little food and water. He wanted them to give up their religion, embrace Islam and marry Muslims, now that they were widows and Sikhs could not come to their aid, having fled to jungles and hills. Their children were dying from starvation in front of them. Others were cut into pieces before their eyes, and their pieces were placed in their laps or hung from their necks. These brave women remained firm and unshaken. They bore all tortures most calmly and stoutly refused to yield. They preferred death to a life of apostasy. Their numbers were countless. Not even one such woman flinched.

These two events are remarkable in the history of mankind. Who brought this change in their thinking, so that these men and women had conquered the fear of death and they died in the spirit of *Charhdi Kala*? The harbinger of this revolutionary change was none else, but Guru Nanak. Guruji had been uttering *Gurbani* from childhood, but up to the age of 30 had remained in a thoughtful mood. His mind was always attuned to *Akal Purakh*, wanting to find out as to how he could remove cruelty and moral corruption from amongst the Muslim rulers on the one hand and utter demoralisation and degraded values of the Hindus on the other hand. There was widespread 'apostasy' among the Hindus, which Guru Nanak Sahib has recorded in his inimitable concise lines of *Asa di Var, shabad 16*.

1. "*Gaoo Brahman ko kar lavo, Gobar Taran na jayee*"

You, Hindus, collect the tax on cows and Brahmins levied by the Muslim rulers, but consider the cowdung as sacred using which would take care of your sins.

2. "Dhoti, Tikka Tey Japmali, Dhaan Malechhan khai"

You don the garb of religiosity by wearing *dhoti*, putting on saffron mark on forehead and wearing *maala* of beads, but earn your livelihood by working for those whom you call *Malechh* — one who eats cow meat and speaks against the Vedas (*Mahankosh*, p. 957).

3. "Antar pooja pareh kateban sanjam Turkaan bhai"

The Hindus worship the idols in their homes, but read Quran and Muslim books outside, and lead the outward life of Turks, so that they win acclaim from the Muslim rulers.

4. "Neel Vastar pehâr hovai parwan, Malechh Dhaan le Poojey Puraan"

The Hindus wear blue clothes to win acceptance from the rulers and earning their livelihood by working for *Malechhas*, worship the *Puraans*.

5. *Abhakhia ka Kutha bakra khana,*

Chowkey ooper kisey na jaana;

De ke chowka kadhi kaar,

Upar aaye baithey koorhiar.

Mutt bhitai vey mutt bhitai,

Eh anh asada phitai"

The Hindus eat Halal goat meat (where goat is killed by speaking foreign language while cutting the throat) in the homes of the Muslims, but in their own homes they mark their kitchen square and draw a line prohibiting anyone from entering it, lest their food should get polluted. In this kitchen these practitioners of falsehood prepare their food.

There is another incisive comment about the 'apostasy' of the Hindus in *Raag Dhansari* by Guru Nanak (G.G.S., p. 663) "*Khatrian taan dharam chhodia malechh bhakhia ghayee*". The Hindus have given up their *dharna* and have adopted the *Kalma* of Muslims for their personal benefit. (Meaning given in *Mahankosh*, p. 957).

On noticing the above demoralisation and apostasy amongst the Hindus and the cruelty of Muslims ("*Maanas Khaney karheh Niwaz*" — those who virtually eat humans, recite their *namaz*), Guru Nanak Devji commenced his mission on coming out of the Bein river. He got clearance from *Akal Purakh* that the type of ideal society which Gururji had in mind was possible only by starting a new *Panth*. Guru Sahib based the organisation of the new *Panth* on three pillars of *Gurbani*, *Gurmukhi* and *Shahidi*.

Gurbani provided a new unique philosophy. The *Mul Mantar* obviated the need of worship of *devis*, *devtas*, rivers, trees and animals, establishing belief in one *Akal Purakh*. *Gurmukhi* letters were given its present

shape by Guru Nanak and Guru Angad to enable Sikhs to read *bani* themselves. When Guru Nanak appointed Guru Angad as his successor, it was to teach the Sikhs to live according to the spirit of *Gurbani*. His other objective was a break from mythology by creating a unique history of sacrifices for one's principles. A new wave of heroism commenced with the *Shahidi* of the Fifth Nanak. The Ninth Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur, also became martyr along with three other Sikhs. Thousands and thousands of Sikhs died cheerfully fighting during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, when the four *Sahibzadas* also became martyrs. In two hundred years our Gurus removed the fear of death, and Sikhs started preferring death rather than dishonour. Our history reveals that whenever Sikhs start leading a life of pleasure, Sikhism declines, and a new wave of heroism and *Shahidis'* rejuvenates us. The Gurdwara Reform Movement and wave after wave of movements for India's independence provided a large number of Sikh martyrs with increasing number of Sikhs taking *Amrit Pahul*.

In June 1985, the Sikhs were at a great historical turning point. We had won a great battle a year earlier. I had pleaded that the religious fervour be utilised for *Amrit Parchar*, teaching of Gurmukhi and a movement against alcohol, drugs and all forms of corruption. There could then be no difficulty in collecting *crores* of Rupees as *Daswandh* for building up the new Akal Takht, and for other projects to raise the image of the community. The army in their official circular *Bat chit* (No. 153, July 1984) circulated throughout the army had stated "...Any knowledge of the '*amritdhari*', who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murders, arson and acts of terrorism, should immediately be brought to the notice of the unit commanders. These people may appear harmless from the outside, but they are basically committed to terrorism. In the interest of all of us, their identity and whereabouts must always be disclosed". The answer to this circular was not to file a case in the court, but to make every Sikh an *amritdhari*, and proclaim to the whole world the oaths taken by Sikhs on initiation. The world was stunned to learn the heroic manner in which 40-50 Sikhs with obsolete firearms had the guts to challenge the might of the Indian army, which had brought artillery and tanks to subdue them. Everyone wants to know about us, and we should utilise the opportunity to explain the basic tenets of Sikhism and that this battle in the Darbar Sahib Complex was according to the long established Sikh traditions.

Unfortunately, our leaders ignored the valour of Sikhs shown in June 1984, so that a wave of depression followed. In March 1994, there were repeated announcements in all gurdwaras of Chandigarh and surrounding villages to the effect that at the time of Vaisakhi in April 1994, the Jathedar of Akal Takht was coming with *Panj Piaras* from Amritsar, and that Sikhs

should come forward in thousands to get initiated in Gurdwara, Sector 19, Chandigarh. Only 46 Sikhs came forward. Apostasy started spreading like an epidemic after 1992 in Sikh families. It has already assumed an alarming proportion.

May I opine that the timely *Gurnat Chetna* movement would get a great fillip, if we add to the chain of *Shahidis* of 17th, 18th centuries, *Shahidis* during the Gurdwara Reform Movement, *Shahidis* of Sikhs during various movements for the country's independence and the remarkable fight put up by Sikhs in June 1984 according to our tradition? A concerted movement for compulsory learning of Gurmukhi by Sikhs would bring blessings of Guru Nanak, who had introduced the script himself.

Most newspapers at present, available to Sikhs, encourage apostasy. There is an urgent need for a Sikh press and a T.V. channel. In the end, I wish to say that all of us who don the external Sikh form, must imbibe the internal qualities of Sikhism. At present most of our leaders are using the religion as a profession for their personal gains.

I welcome the galaxy of scholars and thinkers who have assembled today. Sardar Saran Singh, the renowned editor of *The Sikh Review* is here to read the Keynote Address, and in the afternoon we are honouring him for his *sewa*. Dr Gurhakhsh Singh from Canada is here to share with us his experiences in kindling the Sikh spirit in children in North America. Sardar Bhagwant Singh Dalawari from Tapovan, Amravati is here. I welcome Principal Harbhajan Singh, the teacher of most of our notable Sikh *Par-charaks*. Brig. Gurdip Singh and Lt. Col. Partap Singh would be telling us about Sikhism and Apostasy in the army. The well travelled Dr Harnam Singh Shan would be telling us about his encounters with Apostasy here and abroad and methods to deal with the challenge. I am particularly happy to welcome four young women scholars, Nav Kiran Pal Kaur, Dr Birendra Kaur, Prof. Sarahjot Kaur, and Dr Darshanjot Kaur, who are here to present their papers. I welcome all members of the Institute who have given their valuable time to organise this Seminar and are also participating actively in its deliberations: Dr Gurcharan Singh, Dr Gurdarshan Singh, Brig. Hardit Singh, Dr Kirpal Singh, Prof. Gurtej Singh, Prof. Prabhjot Kaur, Dr Sukhjeet Kaur, Sardar Sardul Singh, Smt. Surinder Kaur, Sardar Gurdev Singh, Smt. Baljit Kaur, Sardar Inderjit Singh and S. Santokh Singh. I cannot remain without paying my sincere tribute to our Secretary, Dr Kharak Singh, who works during the day and dreams during the night for all programmes of the Institute, including *Gurnat Chetna Lehar*. And last but not the least, I welcome all the rest of you, who are gracing the occasion, and I look forward to your active participation in the discussions. *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh*.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Justice Ranjit Singh Narula*

Dr Gurbakhsh Singh, President of the Session, Dr Kuldip Singh President, S. Gurdev Singh, Vice-President, Dr Kharak Singh, Secretary and Nucleus of the Institute of Sikh Studies, S. Gurtej Singh of the Institute of Sikh Studies fame, S. Saran Singh of *The Sikh Review* fame, Brig. Gurdip Singh, S. Bhagwant Singh Dalawari, the living Saint of Tapowan, Dr Johl, Prof. Dhillon, Col. Partap Singh, other celebrities and friends, it is indeed an honour to have been invited to inaugurate this Seminar organised by an Institute of such sterling reputation and stature.

The honour is all the more overwhelming considering the calibre of the scholars sitting besides me including S. Saran Singh, S. Gurtej Singh, Brig. Gurdip Singh, Papaji Dalawariji and other dignitaries. I am humbled in their presence.

The third most overwhelming aspect is the importance of the topic of today's Seminar, put briefly as *Apostasy among Sikh Youth — Its Causes and Cure* — a topic which is of paramount importance to the Sikh nation and of the greatest concern to the country and the community in general, and to me and my like-minded friends present and not present here in particular.

The dictionary meaning of "Apostasy" is "abandonment or renunciation of one's religious faith or moral allegiance; the action of quitting a religious order or renouncing vows without legal dispensation. The abandonment of principles — Raphael had forewarned Adam by dire example to beware Apostasy".

It is expected that the discussion on Apostasy in general, and its relevance to Sikh Youth in particular, would be discussed here alongwith its causes, cure and prevention, and concrete suggestions to avoid it.

The thought-provoking letter of June this year inviting us to participate in this Seminar from Dr Kharak Singh has listed in fair detail each of these aspects to lend a cogent theme to the Seminar — an excellent piece of work for which I must compliment him.

I am sure the learned speakers at this seminar would do full justice to each of these aspects. I would, therefore, like to restrict my inaugural

* Chief Justice (Retd.), Punjab and Haryana High Court.

remarks only to a few observations.

Permit me to rephrase the topic very differently — but which would result in the same recommendations which are even otherwise expected to emerge from this Seminar. Somehow, I feel that the phrasing would be more positive thus :

"How do we create a sense of pride of being Sikhs among our youth? How do we create a bond of love between us and our Gurus? How do we create a sense of identity and gratefulness for having been blessed with the opportunity to have *Dashmesh Pita* as our true and spiritual father?"

I feel these larger issues can form the touchstone to measure the efficacy of the conclusions and recommendations at which we arrive by the time we disperse tomorrow.

My second observation lies in the mention of "Youth" as the subject of today's discussion. It is my firm belief that unless we ourselves can truly inculcate these positive sentiments in us, it is ridiculous to expect the youth merely to follow what we profess but do not practise.

Our faith, our form and our identity are timeless. These are as relevant today, and will eternally be as relevant as they were on the Vaisakhi of 1699. Let us not be wanting in handing over the glorious torch of our faith to the next generation, so that it continues to shine and illuminate the Earth forever.

I am reminded of a story which my son once told me. "Once there was a lion's cub, who got lost in the jungle. He was found by a herd of sheep who accepted the cub as their own. The cub started growing in the belief that it was a sheep. It learnt to bleat and started eating grass. One day, the cub was alone and strayed to a pond in the jungle. It looked down in the water. They say, a loud roar went up in the jungle which was heard miles away. The cub realised who he was. A single lion in the company of the majority of sheep, started behaving like sheep."

Let us also see ourselves, realise what we are, and help the next generation to realise that they are the true Singhs of Guru Gobind Singh. Let us remember that if the cub's face had also started looking like a sheep, he would never have found out his identity.

With these few words, I have the pleasure and the pain of formally inaugurating this Seminar.

Thank you.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sardar Saran Singh*

All of us who are gathered here, and many others, owe a debt of gratitude to Sardar Daljeet Singh. He is not among us in person, but his radiant spirit lives on in his writings and ideas. His lucid exposition of *Gurmat* philosophy will ever remain our guide-post for the future.

The theme of this Seminar, *Apostasy Among Sikh Youth*, may seem somewhat alarmist. But, in one sense, it is really an early warning, seeking ways and means to stem the creeping loss of faith and the identity among the younger generation.

Decline in morality and religion is, however, not confined to the Sikhs. Indeed, arguably, the mass of Sikhs are, proportionately, more religious-minded than their counterparts of other faiths. Materialism everywhere threatens to displace age-old belief systems. There is controversy in various denominations of the Christian faith. Hinduism remains mired in myth and magic. Islam harks back to fundamentalism in the face of modernity. Buddhism appears to be on the retreat. Jainism is more or less assimilated.

A faith that effectively provides purpose and meaning to life on this planet holds the best promise. Guru Granth Sahib, the Scriptural Guru of the Sikhs, offers the most vigorous and durable moral and spiritual insights in every aspect of life in the modern and post-modern world. Consumerism and greed must give way to moral power, contentment and compassion. To the extent we repose faith in the holy *shabad*, we can unburden our mind of anxiety and tension. To accept the Divine Dispensation is to bring peace, joy and enthusiasm into our lives. The process of acceptance applies to congregations, as well as, the individual devotee. Its daily practice must begin at *amrit-vela*, the ambrosial pre-dawn hour best suited to meditation or *Naam simran*. The five daily prayers, *Nitnem*, make us God-conscious, awash with His love and grace. Like our daily meals, let these prayers be diet of our mind and spirit. We shall soon start feeling uplifted, revealing untapped reserves of mental and spiritual strength.

The daily practice of *Nitnem* is aimed at disciplining the mind. But

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disciplining the mind is like taming a tiger. The tragic aspect of human nature in modern times is man's easy descent into evil. Pleasures of the flesh are given precedence and priority, triggering sickness of mind and body. Guru Granth Sahib says, "To be a true *gursikh*, you must rise early and meditate on God's Name". That is the antidote. But we start the day with front-page reports of death, disaster and depravity. We set the wrong mood for the day, and complain of mounting tension, irritability and anger. Returning home, the family is transformed into a group of strangers seeking entertainment out of the "idiot box", ready to snap at one another at the least disturbance. Television has sown the seeds of disintegration of the family.

Since the country is ruled by vested interests of the majority community, with a monopoly over the media, the cultural invasion via satellite television networks has largely been neutralized with heavy doses of Hindu mythology at peak viewing hours. The majoritarian religious paraphernalia is continuously on display, and its social and psychological mores are consequently well safeguarded.

What about the Sikhs? They have the Hobson's choice of either assimilating alien culture projected into their homes from assorted satellites, or watch the official media recycle the garish mythology and a web of pseudo-miraculous paraphernalia from which Guru Nanak had liberated us five hundred years ago. Karl Marx once warned: "The ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas". Struggle between the Sikh ideology and state control is a harsh reality in the present time, as it was in the 17th and 18th centuries. If hegemonic state control of the education system as well as media has deprived the new generation of its moral and spiritual heritage, it is our duty, and our right, to fill the gap by Sunday schools and summer camps, and special education must, therefore, be on the top of our agenda.

When the challenge was frontal and physical, (such as invasions from the northwestern frontiers in the eighteenth century), the youthful Sikh Khalsa nation steeled itself into a shield to protect itself and its motherland. But, now, when the invasion is subtle, devious and psychological, neither we nor our youth seem able to cope with it. The only recourse is to imbibe the spirit of *Gurbani*, to use *gyaneh-ki-badhni* to vanquish the invisible enemy.

Technology provides the tools. Man's innate goodness can use technology to enhance the true virtues. Man's perversity, however, directs scientific inventions for destructive use. Atomic energy may be among the cheapest sources of power, yet atomic weapons remain as the deadliest. Guru Granth teaches us to serve all mankind, to seek the good of all, and the preservation of Mother Earth in all its splendour and diversity. *Gurbani*

exhorts us to manage earth's resources so as not to disturb the harmonious eco-system. Our educational system and information technology should help man discover his inner self and how to control fleshly excesses : violence, greed, anger, jealousy and arrogance.

This is where you as teachers, scientists, theologians, writers or artists can guide the new generation of Sikhs. Genocidal 1984 witnessed a dramatic re-emergence of Sikhism in the West, especially the United States of America and Canada. The new wave of Sikhism marked a return to classical tradition and the natural Khalsa identity. The importance of truthful conduct and practical living became key factors. *Gurmats* camps and Sunday schools sprang up all over North America. Singh Sahib Yogi Harbhajan Singh Khalsa spread the twin-message of *Gurmat* and *Khanda-di-Pahul* across all racial barriers. Gurdwaras sprang up in many cities and towns providing a focal point for weekly congregations. The youth have started discovering the great Sikh heritage.

This new wave is, in certain respects, reminiscent of the golden era of Singh Sabha movement of last quarter of the nineteenth century, which produced such matchless scholars as Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh, Sir Jogindra Singh, Prof. Puran Singh, Sir Sundar Singh Majithia, and many other stars in the Sikh constellation, who ushered in the renaissance, setting personal example, inspiring the youth, writing immortal prose, poetry, history and lexicography — yet retaining rare nobility and humanity. Even challenge breeds the appropriate response. You and your colleagues are no less capable of triggering another such *gyan-ki-andhi* as we approach the year of Destiny 1999 — the 300th Birth Anniversary of the Khalsa Panth. Our options are, in any case, limited. Leadership no longer inspires. Charisma of *sants*, holy men, is a thing of the past. Our youth is disillusioned. As the poet said of the leaders :

ਕੁਛ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਕੀ ਇਨਾਅਤ ਨੇ ਦਿਲ ਤੋੜ ਦੀਆ,

ਔਰ ਕੁਛ ਤਨਹਾਏ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਨੇ ਦਿਲ ਤੋੜ ਦੀਆ ।

Guru Nanak's admonition : "ਰੋਗ ਗਵਾਈਐ ਆਪਣਾ ਤਾ ਨਾਟਕ ਵੇਦ ਸਦਾਏ" applies to our situation. "Physician, heal thyself" was never more truly spoken. Look around us. Does the Shiromani Akali Dal have, e.g., an expert panel on education, Sikh history, economics, employment, social behaviour, dangers of intoxicants and drugs, Punjab's adverse man-woman ratio — or other issues of vital concern for the new generation ? How far have our Universities and Foundations contributed to the development of Sikh culture? They should be the nurseries of Sikh scholarship. Yet, we have few

teachers of divinity, fewer professors of comparative religion; instead of setting up new colleges, our existing Gurmat Missionary colleges are languishing for want of incentives; there is no missionary college for women. One wonders whether University Senate and the S.G.P.C. spare a thought for these glaring shortcomings. An annual seminar, such as this one, can scarcely do justice to the emergent problems. What we need is a crash course for our leaders and educationists in crisis management.

Let every one of us return to basic principles of *Gursikhi*, dedicate ourselves to *Gurbani* and live upto its precepts : Rise early, practise *simran* and pray with recitation of *Nitnem*; attend gurdwara, reflect on *Gurbani*, arrange for our children to be taught Gurmukhi script, organize compulsory *dastar-bandi* and *chami lagna* ceremonies for children and prepare them for the *Khande-di-Pahul* in early teens — both boys and girls. Every family may dedicate one member for *prachar*, duly qualified in divinity and *Gurmat* philosophy. Let us work together to restore the glory and honour of Sikhism, because it is the best value system for us and our future generations :

ਹਰਖੁ ਅਨੰਤ ਸੋਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਥੀਆ ।

ਸੇ ਘਰੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਉ ਦੀਆ ।।

God, in His infinite Grace, bestowed on Nanak the station with unending happiness, and without a trace of sorrow !

This brings me directly to the target-group that this Seminar seeks to address : young boys and girls, teenagers in towns and cities, in farms and factories, in or out of jobs. Typical scepticism runs something like this : "Look, this is my life. We live in 1996, not in 1699. Hair is a hassle, turban takes time". Ignorance is writ large, arrogance palpable. The callow youth does not know that the body is God's gift. We have a lease on it for specified time. The law of God demands obedience and daily-discipline. Achievement demands sacrifice. *Kesh* is integral to body, its care is a duty we owe the Creator. Other *K's* are our moral commitment to the Guru-Prophets. Normally, our mothers, grandmothers, aunts and elder sisters would gently rub in these truths. They would recite *Gurbani shabads*, tell stories of courage and heroism, nurture faith and plant thoughts of dignity and decorum expected of a Sikh. By a conspiracy of circumstances, our women-folk have either been deprived of the opportunity or failed to make any impact on the young minds. Many have themselves been brought up on a secular or Convent-based system of education. But let me not cry over spilt milk.

Mother and teacher are the two pillars of our society. Each reinforces the other. Both must be fully equipped to perform the task of being the

guide, friend and philosopher to the new generation. Apostates are not born, they are made. If the gardener plucks the rose-bud, it is not the fault of the rose plant, nor of the roots which are hidden below the surface. It is the permissive parents who make apostates of their children. They scarcely realise that a true Sikh is horn of the marriage of heaven and earth. To be horn a Sikh is no accident : ਚਿਰੁ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿਪਜਿਆ ਸੰਜੋਗਿ : By design your son or daughter is yours by God's ordinance — not by chance.

Identity is an instinctive gift. Every human, indeed all creatures, seek and cherish identity. The world social order confirms the need for an identity in every sphere of life — as citizen, as a soldier, professional, civilized being, as anybody. *Kesh*, the hair, is an integral part of human body that is a gift of the Creator. Over centuries, and in virtually all continents, long tresses and healthy hair have remained a sign of dignity and holiness, their occult power still a mystery. It is in the biological nature of hair to grow. Lack of hair or baldness are a disease over which all humans agonize, whatever their belief. To cut the hair, knowing it will continue to grow, is foolish and unnatural; it is unnatural and tantamounts to mutilation. Sikhism did not invent hair. The Gurus, however, disapproved of mutilation of body wherein God Himself dwells. Honour and hair, courage and *kesh* have been synonymous in all ages and every continent. The Chinese punishment for grave offences consisted in the public disgrace of a haircut. You can spot a widow in Bengal by her shaven head. Samson declares, hurt at Delilah's betrayal, "There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb; If I be shaven, my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man". (Bible: Judges xvi-17) In modern times, Sikhs are God's chosen people. The Khalsa of *Dasmesh* can never be weak or timid, nor wanting in courage, to preserve and cherish their *kesh* :

"ਦੂਤ ਦਸਮਨ ਸਭਿ ਤੁਝਤੇ ਨਿਵਰਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪੁ ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ।

ਜੇ ਜੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਦੁਖਾਏ ਓਹੁ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਰਾ" ।।

G.G.S., p. 681

The British historian, Arnold J. Toynbee once wrote to the effect that since the future is unknown, the only way we can hope to illuminate it is by looking at the past. Let every child and every teenager be reminded of the story of Baba Atal Rai's sacrifice, Guru Harkrishan's determination, Guru Gobind Singh's courage at the age of nine, the martyrdom of the four *Sahibzadas* and the captive youth in Banda Singh Bahadur's army who won't deny his faith and identity in the face of sure death. They all, and thousands

more, sacrificed their lives so that we may live as proud Sikhs, resplendent in the very image of our Father, Guru Gobind Singh. Times may change, but some things remain the same. Human nature is one such thing. In these critical times, we need a warm heart, a cool head, and our feet firmly planted on the ground, even as our spirit soars in *charhdi kala*. Let us not reject the apostate. Let us win him with love. He is our flesh and blood. Practical wisdom can solve most of the dilemmas of our new generation. Flexibility, not rigidity, should be the policy to reclaim the apostate :

"ਤੁਮ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤ ।

ਤੁਮਰੇ ਦੇਖੀ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ

ਅਪਦਾ ਭਈ ਬਿਤੀਤ" ।।

G.G.S., p. 678

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH — ITS CAUSES AND CURES —

Sardar Karnail Singh*

Before we examine why there is apostasy among the Sikh youth and, in fact, throughout the world, it would be appropriate to briefly state how people adopted their faiths during the ages, and how, in course of time, some of them were disillusioned with religion and became apostate. During the lifetime of prophets, people were drawn towards religion on the strength of its basic tenets. Later, in several cases religions spread more on account of political exigencies of powerful kings and emperors rather than by the religious fervour of a particular faith. For instance, upto the first half of the fourth century A.D., people in the West generally worshipped their rulers as deities. Roman Emperor Constantine saw dangers to his far flung empire from the Germans in the West and the Persians in the East, both heathens by faith. Among the several measures the Emperor undertook to safeguard his empire, the foremost was his decision to declare Christianity as the state religion. Earlier, there were one fifth Christians in his domain but with the change in state religion, the whole empire embraced the new faith. A common religion and culture of this vast and powerful Roman state thus became a model for the whole of Europe to adopt Christianity.¹

Similarly, when Emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism, it spread to the whole of his empire, i.e., all parts of India including Afghanistan and its peripheral regions and whole of South East Asia. Likewise, wherever the Muslim conquerors went, Islam followed. Within eighty years of Prophet Mohammed's death in 632 A.D., the entire middle eastern region embraced Islam.

Later, almost all religions bifurcated into different sects for genuine differences on fundamentals as well as on personal reasons of some of the powerful rulers. Whereas Buddhism was a revolt against the rigidity of the then prevailing Hinduism, Protestantism rose against certain Roman Catholic basic tenets of Christianity. Islam also split up into Sunni and Shia sects because of some traditions in their religion. However, Protestantism came to England in a different manner. When Queen Catherine failed to give birth to a male heir to the throne, King Henry VIII of England, under political

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compulsions of sixteenth century, decided to have a second queen. For this, annulment of the first marriage was a religious pre-requisite. But as Pope Clement VII was under the political influence of queen Catherine's nephew, Emperor Charles V, the Pope declared the first marriage in order. Enraged at this, King Henry separated himself from the Roman Catholic church and declared himself as Head of church of England. In the process, the whole country became Protestant. It is clear, therefore, that religions also spread through political influence of powerful rulers. Also, it is equally clear that religious sects were formed for genuine religious differences as well as for exigencies quite alien to tenets of faith.

We will now explain how Western rulers separated themselves from the influence of Church under the nomenclature of secularism; how it resulted in erosion of faith in religion by some people and how governments and people in the East blindly followed this pattern. Sirdar Kapur Singh in his, *Sikhism — An Oecumenical Religion* succinctly explains the intellectual and emotional estrangement of Western people from religion and their consequent idealisation of science and technology. This began with certain events when independent minds began to reject institutional Christian religion, as such.

First of all, a conflict arose between Papacy and the secular authority of German Emperor Frederick the Second, which projected the former as a self-centered and worldly institution, unconcerned with its professed spiritual principles, motivated with naked desire for worldly power and moved by the sentiments of revenge against those who opposed its desire for political domination. In 1305 A.D., when a French Archbishop was elected as Pope, he chose to set up his seat at Avignon in France rather than at Rome in Italy, which would have meant sacrifice of French luxury for Roman austerity. As such, there was a line of Avignon Popes for 70 years. The result was that in 1378, a new Pope at Rome was set up. In this way, for a period, there were two Popes instead of one, leading to endless confusion in the minds of people.² In the words of Lord Macaulay, 'Two Popes, each with a doubtful title, made all Europe ring with their mutual invectives and anathemas. Rome cried out against the corruptions of Avignon; and Avignon, with equal justice, recriminated on Rome'.³ Besides, French Popes became instrumental in abolishing the Order of Knight Templars at the instigation of King of France, who wanted to grab their property. Further, since many people would not recognize the Avignon Popes, the second French Pope built up a grasping financial organisation to increase Papal revenues. These measures were seen as disgustingly mercenary and commercial in character, resulting in further decline of faith in religion.⁴

In 1409, the Council of Pisa agreeing that an Oecumenical Council

rather than the Pope was the supreme authority in Church, 'deposed both the Popes and elected a third one. But neither of the deposed Popes resigned, resulting in there being three Popes instead of the intended one.'⁵

Simultaneous with this unfortunate spectacle of erosion in religious faith, there arose an intellectual movement called Renaissance. Its essence was an attitude of mind which regarded human values as the basic tenets of humanity, independent of Christianity. It was further reinforced with some scientific inventions and discoveries during the 18th and 19th centuries, which were in conflict with certain dogmas of Christianity, particularly pertaining to the Genesis. Besides, the people also felt that religious dominance in the West had led to nothing but social strife and extreme hatred including induction of Inquisition and burning at the stake among different sects of Christianity.⁶ It was in this context that the saintly Tolstoy later in his, *The Kingdom of God*, (pp. 25-26) quoting from *The Book of Faith* wrote, 'Christ by means of his disciples caught the whole world in his net of faith, but the big fish burst the net and escaped from it, and through the holes they made, the other fish got out, so that the net has been left almost empty'.

He added, 'The big fish that burst the net are the rulers, emperors, popes and kings, who, without renouncing power, accepted not Christianity but only its mask'.⁷

Since religion no longer held the central interest of intelligent minds in the West, their vast reservoirs of energy were directed towards another channel of non controversial Natural Sciences. As the data collected in respect of these sciences accumulated and the speculative thought based upon this data assumed more and more definite collection, the result was a gradual demolition of the pyramid of cosmology and dogmas built by the great minds of Christianity, which had constituted the spiritual heritage of the West for the past 1500 years or more. As a consequence, the Western thought was secularised.⁸

The religious tradition of the Western man had held before his mind the vision of a 'Kingdom in Heaven' located in the life hereafter, which would compensate for the ills and deprivations of this life. This had enthralled his soul all these long centuries. Now that Christianity stood partially discredited as a way of life, it appeared to him that instead of a kingdom in heaven, a sort of paradise on earth was nevertheless a practical possibility.⁹

The advancement of Applied Sciences opened up a vista of tremendous technical progress, scientific inventions and discoveries which produced material goods in abundance. These advantages resulted in domination of the whole world by the European nations, enabling them to exploit the

resources of the world to their advantage. In the process, they did create a paradise in Europe so far as production of material goods providing comforts and luxuries of life were concerned. Its cumulative effect was further erosion of faith in religion in the West and the East.¹⁰

According to one report, there are 32.4% Christians, 17.1% Muslims, 13.5% Hindus, 6.2% Bodhis, 0.4% Jews, 9.2% Folk Tribals and new religions and 21.3% atheists in the world. This proves two facts. One, that more than one fifth people of the world have lost faith in religion and two, that the religion wise population is proportionate to the religion of the ruling and former ruler nations.¹¹

We will now briefly relate the establishment and spread of Sikh religion, its basic tenets, its appeal to the heart and mind of the people, particularly the low and the downtrodden, and the course of hardships it had to wade through at the hands of rulers both past and present, and some other factors responsible for apostasy among some Sikhs and for that matter especially among the Sikh youth.

India during the 15th century was at its nadir, when Guru Nanak was born in 1469. The Hindu society was then rife with caste rigidity, idol worship and empty rituals. The ruling Muslims deviating from the essence of Islam, practised tyranny and fanaticism, forcibly imposing their faith on others. People were superstitious, servile and without a will to survive.

Guru Nanak established a religion with belief in One God, truthful living, hard and honest work for livelihood and sharing it with the needy and the afflicted. He laid down equality of man and woman. Unlike other religions, his followers were to recite hymns composed by their Gurus in their spoken language. They were not to compromise with tyranny whether from the state or others. Intoxicants were forbidden. In sum, the spiritual and the temporal life was welded together to be practised in daily life. Little wonder then that this ethical and simple religion found ready acceptance with the people suppressed and humiliated for long.

By 1604, the compilation of Sikh scripture, the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib, by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun, and its installation in the Golden Temple at Amritsar, gave it the shape of a regular church. Hinduism and Islam had been in India for over 3,000 and 500 years respectively, though lately in somewhat corrupted form, yet the essence of these faiths had deeply entrenched itself into the people's psyche. To pull them out of the slush, therefore, the line of guruship continued for 239 years in 10 human forms, and still continues in the form of 'Word', the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikh scripture contains hymns of 36 God intoxicated souls. They are six Sikh

Gurus and 30 other saints, Hindus, Muslims, Brahmins and the so-called scheduled castes from all parts of India.¹² Again, unlike other religious holy books, Guru Graoth Sahib is the only scripture compiled in the spoken language of the region, and edited by one of its own prophets, the fifth guru, Guru Arjun.

On the other hand, the first document telling the life story of Jesus Christ was produced in Palestine around about 50 A.D. in Aramaic vernacular. However, the Christian Bible, a collection of books, 27 in all, by different apostles and laymen other than Lord Jesus, (for he himself wrote nothing), containing his teachings, life, death, and Resurrection was written in Greek. While the dates of their writing are uncertain, it is agreed, however, that a Jew, Saul of Tarsus by name, was transformed into Christianity around A.D. 33. He as a Christian missionary, came to be known as St. Paul. He later began to reinforce the spoken word into Epistles in A.D. 52. Some years later, these were changed into Roman and still later into as many languages as the different ethnic groups of people embraced Christianity. When St. Paul completed his Epistles as a state prisoner in Rome and when he was martyred, is still in the realm of speculation. But later, the necessity for an authentic account of Lord's deeds and sayings was accepted by all Christians, and steps were taken to fill the gaps of knowledge. The present four Christian Gospels, collectively called *The New Testament* is by Luke, Mark, Matthew and St. John, all compiled between AD 65 and 90. There are so many differences in the last one called *Revelation* and the three other Gospels that some scholars have decided that the former is not to be relied upon as history.¹³

Similarly, *Bhagawad Gita*, a Hindu religious treatise, was compiled by Rishi Ved Vyas at least 1,000 years after Lord Krishna delivered it.¹⁴ Likewise, according to E. Royston Pike, it was after the death of Prophet Mohammad, when there were to be no more revelations, that the necessity of putting on record what he had said was properly realized. Khalifa Abu Bakur directed the late Prophet's secretary to collect the oddments and get them into some sort of order. Then it was transcribed along with what could be gathered from the memory of men. It was called, *The Koran*.¹⁵

But such is the authenticity, originality and the spiritual value, and such the depth and sweep of the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, that the modern theologians and scholars with their penetrating insight into spiritual, temporal and scientific realms have described it as follows —

Noble prize winner Ms. Pearl S. Buck recorded :

'The hymns of Guru Granth Sahib are an expression of man's loneli-

ness, his aspirations, his longings, his cry to God and his hunger for communication with that Being. I have studied the scriptures of other great religions, but I do not find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find in the *Adi Granth*. It speaks to me of life and death; of time and eternity; of the temporal human body and its needs; of the mystic human soul and its longing to be fulfilled; of God and the indissoluble bond between them.'

Lord Sorensen, Chairman of World Congress on Faiths observed :

'Guru Nanak's poetry enlightens all those who cherish Spiritual Reality and reminds those of other faiths of precious treasures they can gather for their own souls.'

The world famous British historian, Prof. Toynbee wrote :

'Guru Granth is part of mankind's common spiritual treasure. It is important that it should be brought within the direct reach of as many people as possible... In this coming religious debate, Nanak's Sikh religion and its scripture, *Guru Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.'

Former President of India, Dr, Sir S. Radhakrishnan declared :

'...We find in *Guru Granth* a wide range of mystical emotions, intimate expressions of the personal realisation of God and rapturous hymns of divine love. The barriers of seas and mountains will give way before the call of eternal truth which is set forth with a freshness of feeling and fervour of devotion in the *Guru Granth*.'

The mystic poet of the East, Sir Mohd. Iqbal, in his immortal poem, *Nanak*, wrote :

'India was once again blessed by God with Nanak, possessed of all attributes of a prophet, a complete and a perfect human being. Nanak's appearance in the world was no less than that of Prophet Ibrahim 5,000 years ago.'¹⁶

A vital question then arises, how come, that in spite of all this abundance of spiritual wealth and tradition with the Sikhs in the form of *Guru Granth Sahib*, its institutions such as historic Gurdwaras and Sri Akal Takht and their management through a Parliament of Sikhs, the S.G.P.C., their educational centres and Universities, their democratic way of functioning as a community through the media of *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmatta*, and their glorious chronicles of the past five hundred years, the Sikh youth and some fake intelligentsia should not be inspired by their rich heritage, but instead look the other way round ?

The answer to this riddle is manifold.

1. Continuity of a reign of terror, machinations and intrigues of the rulers for long periods of history against this young nation, though for different reasons, and the consequent fear psychosis leading to indifference and lack of faith for religion among the weak hearted members of the community. The State tyranny is crystal clear from the martyrdom of the fifth and ninth Sikh Gurus and countless pious Sikhs for political reasons and from the sword and fire culture in vogue against them until, according to Sohan Lal Suri, "only two thousand Sikhs were barely able to survive in jungles and other odd places". Also, when we learn how after the British fraudulent occupation of Punjab, they planned to Christianise the whole community and to mortgage the Golden Temple Complex to a Hindu.¹⁷ It is evident too, how the current Brahminical, McLeodian, Radha Swami and Nirankari offensive strongly backed by the present rulers is doing its worst to slur the Sikh religion, history and culture, through fake movements, infiltrations of anti-Sikh elements in the Sikh religious and educational centres and through the state controlled electronic and print media blitz, besides the genocide symbolised by operation Bluestar and the November 1984 massacre of Sikhs throughout India. Dr Sangat Singh records, "In a decade (1981-91) anything between one million to 1.2 million (10-12 lakh) Sikh youth have been liquidated one way or the other".¹⁸ He adds, "Already considerable cowardicing has taken place among the Sikhs all over India, including Punjab, which has seen killing of genocidal proportions. In the face of actual and incipient violence and state terrorism, a sizable section of Sikh youth, especially school children, has cast off their *keshas*."¹⁹ Earlier, according to Dr Hari Ram Gupta and Dr Gopal Singh, 2 lakh to 2.5 lakh Sikhs were decimated by the then rulers in half a century (1715-65).²⁰
2. Perennial hostility of the so-called upper caste Hindus, particularly the Brahmins, who have held high positions in every regime, past or present. This is chiefly due to the fact that the Sikh religion has demolished some of the basic tenets of Hinduism, such as "caste", "idol worship", and "a pyramid of empty rituals" as laid down in the Vedas. Their hostility is evident by the fact that Guru Gohind Singh had to fight more battles against the Hindu hill Rajput Rajas than the Mughal Empire. While Nawab Malerkotla was advising the Governor of Sirhind not to harm the younger sons of the Guru, being innocent and of tender age, Diwan Sucha Nand was advocating their elimination. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, according to the Sikh principles and tradition of justice and secularism, appointed Hindus and Muslims along with Sikhs to the highest positions in the state.

While the former (Brahmin and Dogra ministers) meanly betrayed, turned traitors and became finally responsible for the fall of the kingdom, the latter remained loyal and patriotic till the last round in the Anglo-Sikh Wars was fired. During the twenties, the Sikhs were engaged in a life and death struggle to take control of the gurdwaras from the *mahants*. While the government had become reconciled to let the Sikhs resume control of their shrines,²¹ M.K. Gandhi, under the cloak of saintliness and posing as a sympathiser, did his worst in misleading the Sikhs with one pretext or another, resulting in a blood curdling six year long clash with the mightiest government of the day. Also, when Dr Ambedkar decided to embrace Sikhism with millions of his followers, and when the All India Hindu Maha Sabha and leaders like Pt. Madan Mohal Malviya had agreed to their becoming Sikhs rather than Muslims or Christians, and when a college and a printing press had been established at Bombay for the Neo-Sikhs, Gandhi, true to his salt, under a threat of fast unto death, sabotaged the projects, so that the Sikh religion does not spread to other parts of India.²² The betrayal of the Sikhs by the Gandhi-Nehru-Patel trinity and their successors and cohorts during the final stages of negotiations with the British for transfer of power and ever since the partition, is a classic example of the present day pitiable condition of the community and their institutions, religious as well as others.

3. During the late twenties, Communism found ready acceptance among the Punjab peasantry partly because it represented the rich legacy of Gadhar, Akali/Babbar Akali and Kirti Kisan anti-government movements and partly because of their growing discontentment due to the oppressive land laws.²³ Some of the Communist leaders were trained in Moscow, the fountain-head of non-believers. This movement, therefore, also had its toll on the Sikh way of life. Dr Trilochan Singh records, '... A host of turbaned and bearded communists, atheists, agnostics, opportunists bearing the name of "Singh", spiritually blind, intellectually corrupt and highly conceited scholars have described Sikhs and Sikhism as no one with rudimentary religious and historical insight would do'.²⁴ Dr Sangat Singh writes, 'The Communist Party of India (Marxist), under the influence of Surjeet, thinks that once the Khalsa identity is overwhelmed, the Sikhs, alienated from Brahminism, would fall a prey to Marxism'.²⁵
4. Along with the above said factors, dismal failure and stark inability of Sikh leadership, particularly after taking over control of Gurdwaras in 1925, to lay down special programmes for the propagation of Sikh faith in all its various facets, is chiefly responsible for the present day religiously barren situation in the community and the leadership vacuum. Early steps should

have been taken to impart higher religious knowledge of international level to *Granthis* and preachers before they were asked to perform services in the gurdwaras or among the general Sikh public. Instead, the Sikh leaders were drawn into a whirlpool of political squabbles vis-a-vis other political parties, because of the approaching independence. They have not been able to get out of it up-till now.

5. Besides other social ills, such as cinemas, electronic media and yellow journalism, which have entered the psyche of modern youth, the drug and narcotic mafia has re-emerged as a powerful factor in Punjab under state patronage.²⁶ Neither are there any higher Sikh religious studies prescribed in Sikh educational institutions. Whatever religious background was once available to the youngsters in Sikh homes in the form of *Nitnem*, life stories of Sikh Gurus and martyrs and other Sikh *Rahit Maryada*, has disappeared with the so-called modern way of life of young mothers and the worldly rat race among the menfolk. The result is the prevalent indifference towards religion.

The misfortunes of the last decade and half have, however, awakened the community to the dangers ahead, particularly the erosion of its identity. As such, several organizations, individually and collectively, are taking measures to safeguard it. For instance, an elaborate three years programme of propagation and enlightenment of Sikhism titled, *Gurnat Chetna Lehar*, has been launched under the patronage of Sri Akal Takht Sahib by nine major Sikh Institutions in Punjab namely, S.G.P.C., Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan (Amritsar), Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle (Ludhiana), Damdami Taksal, Chowk Mehta, Sant Samaj (Amritsar) and Institute of Sikh Studies (Chandigarh), by holding four days camps in all the Sikh Schools and Colleges in Punjab. A suitable syllabus for training has been prepared by the religious and educational experts.²⁷ Similar efforts at Gurdwara level in North America and Europe are also discernible. A vital programme of higher level training of *Granthis* and preachers must be taken up by the S.G.P.C., without which Sikhs, and particularly the youth, cannot be persuaded to recite and learn *Gurbani*.

Besides, the interest being shown in the current S.G.P.C. elections by all the Sikh institutions, intellectuals and scholars is yet another sign of awakening of the community to protect and preserve the Sikh heritage through this premier institution. After identification of the causes of erosion of faith among the Sikhs, as indicated above, and the concern shown by the community as a whole, there are positive signs that the Panth will once again rise to the occasion and would save the situation. In this crusade, the role of

religious and tension free environment in Sikh homes is crucial. Once Sikh values of life are adopted, such a cosy domestic atmosphere becomes automatic.

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SIKH YOUTH TODAY : ON THE EDGE OF APOSTASY

Sardar Raminder Singh*

Everywhere, Sikh communities today are grappling with a very serious issue — that of the alienation and growing disillusionment among our youth with regard to Sikhism and its leaders. Some scholars are rushing to conclude that apostasy is on the rise among our youth.

Before we arrive at any hasty judgment, we should first understand the true meaning of apostasy. While we could consult any number of dictionaries and encyclopaedias, let us consult a dictionary available in India :

ENGLISH-PUNJABI DICTIONARY, Amrik Singh Ahluwalia,
Star Publication (Pvt.) Ltd., 1994

APOSTASY: Total desertion of one's faith and principles. Apostate — *Adharmi* — one who renounces his religion and its professed principles.

As can be seen from this definition, Apostasy and an Apostate represent an extreme — total abandonment of one's religion and its principles. Therefore, we have to first ask ourselves whether Apostasy is an accurate label to try to describe problems we are discerning among Sikh youth. What are some of these problems ?

Some trends that can be noted among Sikh youth are :

- Dropping rate of attendance at gurdwaras.
- Deviation from 5-K's : *kesh*, *kangha*, *kachha*, *kirpan* and *kara*.
- Cutting of head hair and removal of other body hair.
- Trimming of beard.
- Inability to explain Sikhism and its principles to others.
- Desire to hang out with members of the majority culture — Hindus in India, and white people abroad — and to emulate their life styles and interests.
- Lack of respect towards elders and parents, and use of swear-words in daily language.

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- Starting with little lies and "graduating" to bigger lies to hide un-Sikh activities, until it becomes a habit that is difficult to shake off.
- Lack of inner self-confidence as Sikhs.

Of course, we can add on to this list. But what seems to be clear is that the trends do not include an open and final denunciation of Sikhism or its principles, i.e., Apostasy. The interesting thing is that while opting for a life style that is counter to Sikh tenets, the youths are at the same time proud to display the *Khanda* emblem on their jackets and clothes — biker groups in the United Kingdom or rock bands in Toronto, Canada.

It may be a relief that our youth have not totally abandoned Sikhism, but if this trend of drifting away from Sikhism is unchecked or not corrected, it could one day lead to Apostasy. In other words, Sikh youth today are perhaps on the edge of Apostasy.

What are some of the underlying causal factors for these trends that are bringing our youth to the edge of Apostasy.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CAUSAL FACTORS

1. Leadership : In gurdwaras, political arena (municipal, state and central levels of government), cultural activities, and sports. There has been for the past 20 years a disturbing trend towards personal aggrandizement and bitter rivalries among our leaders in these areas. This has sown the seeds for disillusionment among adult Sikhs, who in discussions at home with family members or in social get-togethers give vent to their anger against these leaders. Although our youth may seem silent at these get-togethers, they do listen carefully to what their elders are saying. They pick up this feeling of anger and disenchantment against such leaders, and in combination with other factors outlined below, this starts the process of drifting away from Sikhism.

2. Education About Sikhism : Although the adults today have some knowledge of the origin of Sikhism, the teachings of our Gurus and the heroic deeds of Sikhs throughout the history of Punjab and India, our youths will be hard-pressed if asked to come up with the names and brief achievements of all our Gurus. This is more the case for Sikhs abroad and outside of Punjab where Sikhism is not a regular subject of study.

The lives and teachings of Guru Nanak and the nine other Gurus remain something vague and distant to our kids, who have blurred images of scenes of our Gurus portrayed in calendars and magazines, especially during festive occasions like *Vaisakhi* or *Gurpurbs*. In the absence of training or

instructions on Sikhs and Sikhism in schools, our youth cannot be blamed for their paucity of knowledge about Sikhism or about Sikhism's message to the world. For most youths abroad and outside of Punjab, our *shabads* and *Gurbani* might as well be Greek to them, for while they may like the melodious tunes, they do not have a clue as to their meaning.

So, lacking knowledge about Sikhism's messengers, its message and its Scripture, our youths today are walking empty vessels. There exists a vacuum. But, as we all know, empty vessels do not remain empty for very long! The infinite supply of non-Sikh magazines, videos, cassettes, books and TV programmes on majority culture heroes, values (or lack thereof!) and generally anti-religious messages and literature are only too eager to fill this empty space in our youth. So, day by day, these un-Sikh and anti-Sikh messages begin to filter into our youth until their vessels are completely filled. As we know, it is difficult to add even a drop more to a container that is filled to the brim. So, even when our youth, filled to the brim with un-Sikh material, do happen to encounter Sikh messages through travelling *Gianis* like Sant Singh Maskeen, or read stimulating articles in Sikh journals and abstracts that appeal to them, they only have a momentary effect on our youth.

3. Media Control : Sikhs everywhere lack official control of radio, television, and newspapers — media that influence the daily lives of Sikh youth. In Punjab, the problem is severe with regard to radio and television, which are controlled by government license. Abroad, the problem is even more severe as even the print media is mostly biased against Sikhs due to a lack of in-depth knowledge about the Sikh religion and culture.

Youth everywhere are curious, impressionable and thus vulnerable. If they are subjected to daily bombardment with un-Sikh material, it is not long before their already weak defences against such attacks crumble, so that it becomes easy for un-Sikh groups that control the media to "brainwash" our youth into thinking that Sikhism is not "cool". Soon, our youth start to trim their hair and beards, the boys start wearing earrings and the girls start putting on make-up at a young age. This starts a "vicious cycle" that leads inevitably to social activities that lead to alcohol, lies, disobedience and promiscuity.

4. Negative Image : Sikhs suffer from a negative image abroad and in India. In India, the Hindu dominated media, particularly the media controlled by Hindu extremists, treat Sikhs and Sikhism as being inconsequential. Sikhism is portrayed as an offshoot of Hindu culture, and Sikhs as generally being less cultured than Hindus. Sikhs who want to declare and assert a separate identity are portrayed as being disruptive and *dushmans* of *Bharat Mata*. Abroad, Sikhs are somehow lumped together with images of

Khomeini and Islamic fundamentalist groups, as being a dangerous and violent people, who often resort to terrorism to achieve their aims. For this, a lot of the credit can go to a long orchestrated campaign by the Indian Government from 1984 to the early 90s through control and/or ownership of news agencies to discredit Sikhs and to highlight incidents of terrorist activities. During this period, I do not recall any official articles from Indian Government sources praising the achievements and contributions of Sikhs to India's success in various fields.

This period must rank as one of those where Sikhs' moral and self-image of themselves reached an all-time low, particularly in India, where known and identified perpetrators of the Delhi massacres were allowed to go about their normal activities for years, and where police could stop any Sikh at random and subject him/her to all types of insults, degradation, blackmail, and in extreme cases, torture and murder. The justice system often turned a blind eye to these activities. All this took a terrible toll of Sikhs' self-image of themselves among our youth, who could not understand why a brave and honest people could allow themselves to be treated thus.

5. Economic Conditions : In India, economic conditions would not be a strong causal factor, since Sikhs are generally among the well-to-do class, being honest, hardworking and dynamic. Problem of youth disillusionment with Sikhism occurs in both rich and poor Sikh families. Therefore, in India, it is more a matter of Sikhs being a small island in an ocean of Hindu culture and influence. However, abroad, the picture changes. As part of the social trends in countries abroad, Sikh families have already shrunk to small nuclear family units — father, mother and children — as compared to the extended family system of days gone by. Therefore, a lot of the support and reminders of Sikh culture and religion from uncles, aunts and well-wishers are gone. Due to this, the load on the father and mother to make up for the "lost" relatives in educating their children has increased. What exacerbates the situation is that in today's economy, both father and mother have to work to maintain the standard of living to which they have been used to — pay the mortgage on the house, payments on the car, taxes, and so on. So, against an increased burden to educate their children, parents have reduced resources in terms of time and money. Fewer and fewer parents can afford the expenses of a long family vacation to Punjab, where the kids could be exposed to a total Sikh environment including the extended family. So, the kids are left more and more to the TV as a "baby-sitter" except that this baby-sitter is motivated purely by commercial greed. It does not really care for the well-being of the individual child. So, we have sexy images, lewd jokes and scenes, and 99% non-religious material thrown at our kids, filling up the "empty space" in them.

CURES — WHAT SOLUTIONS LIE AHEAD TO COUNTER THESE DISTURBING TRENDS IN OUR YOUTH ?

1. De-programming : Before we can fill our youth again with positive Sikh material, we have to first find a way to get rid of the junk and garbage that has been taking up the empty space in them. To achieve this, we may have to borrow some de-programming techniques from the professional de-programmers that are often hired by American and Canadian parents to bring their children, who join various cults and Eastern religions, back to Western values. That is, we must find a way to show our youth that what they have been exposed to all these years has actually been harming them. (It will require another research paper to deal with this issue alone!). For this task, we will need to enlist the help of those dynamic Sikh youth, who have achieved success in their fields and look attractive and radiant in their Sikh appearance, to convince their brothers and sisters who have wandered astray.

2. Funds : The budget of the Shiromani Gurdwara Pracharak Committee in India alone is Rupees 92 Crore. The Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, and individual gurdwara committees in India and over the world, together command a budget that runs in millions, if not billions, of dollars. It is inexcusable that almost nothing significant has been spent on activities geared towards bringing our youth back to Sikhism. If our methods have failed, then let us not be ashamed to bring in experts — foreign experts if necessary and accept the higher cost — to help us devise strategies and programmes that will make our youth feel proud to be Sikh again.

3. Leadership : Our leadership, whether in Punjab or abroad, has, with a few exceptions, shown itself to be spiritually and morally bankrupt. When one leader can remain head of the SGPC for 17 years, or several factions of the same political party compete against each other, or a clique of close friends and families can continue to control gurdwaras for years and years, then something is seriously wrong. We all know that when Indira Gandhi surrounded herself with yes-men, she became out of touch with what was really going on at the grass-root level. This led to her leading a government that turned a blind eye to all sorts of wrong-doings by her party people. What is happening among Sikhs is not too different. Our leaders, in their greed to stay in power and control vast amounts of money, have shut out many a talented person who could have helped the Sikh community. This must stop. The individual Sikh families must begin to stand up and oppose wrong-doings whenever they occur, even if it is by their close friends or relatives. After all, our Gurus have taught us that truthful living is the highest virtue.

4. Daily Prayer And Ardas : Perhaps, this is more important than all the above factors combined. The power of collective prayer is inestimable. We have to once again learn to arrive as beggars in the presence of our Guru Granth Sahib and not as proud businessmen, scholars or landlords. We should sincerely beg from our Guru to fill our *jholi* with *Gurnat* and wholesome actions and lifestyles, so that we can show our youth, by example, those qualities about Sikhism for which our Gurus and countless martyrs laid down their lives.

This article has deliberately refused to accept that our youths have become apostates. Renunciation of any set of beliefs and principles implies that there was a good knowledge of them prior to making a decision to reject them. This is not the case with most of our youth, who for reasons presented above, and many others that will be presented by Sikh scholars on this subject, have not had a proper opportunity to understand Sikhism and its teachings. For example, the phenomenon of Apostasy is not critical among Sikh adults, although there will be varying degrees of fidelity to the 5-K's and the *Rahit Maryada*. This is so because our adults have had a much better exposure/education to Sikh teachings. But, we certainly face the danger that our Sikh youth are on the edge of Apostasy and that the time to take corrective action is now, before it is too late.

GROWING APOSTASY AMONG THE SIKHS — CAUSES AND CURES — *

Sardar Sangat Singh**

Concern over apostasy is part of *Chetna Lehar* initiated earlier this year. On the face of it, this was upshot of the need to address the main issues facing the Sikh *Panth* in view of the forthcoming elections to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, being held after a lapse of 17 years. One only hopes that this interest is long lasting and will survive the post-election scenario, and the formulations made as part of *Chetna Lehar* and now being articulated at this Conference will help to sustain the community's interest in reversing the trend of apostasy : this is vital to the survival of Sikhism as a vibrant faith.

I

There was need for such an appraisal in the post 1947 era. The decolonisation of the subcontinent constituted a watershed in the Sikh position in the residue India, or Bharat, when, for the first time in their history, the Sikhs came under the tutelage of a reviving Hinduism. Brahminism, whenever in ascendancy, had been intolerant of divergent faiths : it had successfully tamed Jainism to fall within the framework of Hinduism, and exterminated Buddhism from the land of its birth. Brahminism, now, was resuming its march after a hiatus of a millennium.

The intentions of Hinduism in independent India were made clear by M.K. Gandhi, on whom had fallen the mantle of various strands of Hindu revivalism of the 19th century, and who was acclaimed as "father of 'our' nation". Precisely, on 21st January, 1948, he told a Sikh delegation led by Giani Kartar Singh :

I read your Granth Sahib. But I do not do so to please you. Nor shall I need your permission to do so. But the Guru has not said anywhere that you must grow beards, carry *kirpan* and so on.

Gandhi, in short, in his inimitable style, wanted the Sikhs to disown Guru Gobind Singh, cast off *kirpan* and other essentials of the Khalsa, shave

* Historical facts mentioned in the paper are derived from the author's, 'The Sikhs in History', (New York, 1995; 2nd edition, 1996).

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off their hair and merge into the ocean of Hinduism. That was his last testament to the 'nation', of which, a short while earlier, he had been acclaimed as 'father'.

Six weeks earlier, on 4th December, 1947, M.K. Gandhi had said :

Even Guru Nanak never said that he was not a Hindu nor did any other Guru... It cannot be said that Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism are separate religions. All these four faiths and their offshoots are one. Hinduism is an ocean into which all the rivers run. It can absorb Islam and Christianity and all other religions and only then can it become the ocean.

Gandhi's objective was to make Hinduism that ocean.

M.K. Gandhi's pronouncements in post-independence period were not acts in isolation, and were reflective of his formulations on Sikhism and the Sikh's place in the Indian polity right from his introduction to the Sikh affairs following Nankana tragedy in 1921. Gandhi emitted total hostility to Sikhism. Besides, Gandhi's formulations were in tune with the general Hindu formulations on the Sikh movement right from third quarter of 16th century, Guru Amar Das era, when Brahmins led a deputation to Emperor Akbar, and sought intervention of the Central Government to curb the Sikh movement over the centuries; and it found new articulation in Gandhi.

Then, there was Jawaharlal Nehru, acclaimed builder of 'modern', but obsolescent and corrupt India; he founded the 'dynasty', and oriented the Congress Party to implement Sikh-baiting policies. He was conscious of his Gangu Brahmin heritage; he was a self-confessed racist Brahmin. Girdhari Lal Jain in his *Hindu Phenomenon*, published posthumously, (Delhi, 1995), recognises Nehru and Indira Gandhi's considerable contribution to the rise of Hindu revivalism, *Hindutava*, in independent India. By the closing years of independence movement, Jawaharlal had emerged as a full-fledged Hindu ideologue; he gave expression to his atavistic perception of Hindu revivalism in his *Discovery of India* (1946), wherein, he, in the words of Shaikh Mohamad Abdullah, (*Aatish-i-Chinar*), aspired to emerge "as an instrument to establish, once again, that old dispensation".

Despite Gandhi's inimical pronouncements and character of Nehruvian dynasty, Indian National Congress continued to attract a stream of Sikh leaders who left the Shiromani Akali Dal to play to the tune of new masters. We may pause to look at the personalities involved. These being,

- Mangal Singh MLA (Central), Sardul Singh Caveesar (the ideologue), and Baba Kharak Singh (who had stood out so valiantly at the time of 1929

Lahore Congress Session). At one time or the other, they had correct perception of Congress character, but never looked back.

- Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir (once Jathedar Akal Takht), Partap Singh Kairoo (who played such a harmful role), Swaran Singh, the Big Babu. All of them acted as robots, more loyal than the King.
- Baldev Singh (who had pangs of conscience after he was ousted from Defence Ministership), Hukam Singh (who rose to the occasion in 1965-66 in events leading to Punjabi Suba), Giani Kartar Singh (who had such an immense love for *Panth*, but had still higher for his Ministerial Chair). They progressively played a digressive role.
- Giani Zail Singh, Buta Singh. Both of them did maximum damage to Sikhism in recent times. Their exorcism or punishment, on certain points, by Akal Takht does not in any way lessen their wrongs.
- Congress always had a number of self-centred clowns from amongst the Sikhs to queer the pitch.

The importance of each and every one to Congress lay in proportion to the damage they caused to Sikhism and Sikh ideals.

The post-1947 history of the treatment meted out to the Sikhs and their present plight is to be seen in this context.

II

The Sikh leadership had bungled atrociously in 1946-47 to emerge as a cropper in post-decolonisation era. Its failure to secure three-way division of Punjab, aired in Swaran Singh-Sachar statement of 21st April, 1947, which meant separation of Haryana area, compounded its imprudence. It lived in a make believe world of its own.

The dawn of independence on 15th August 1947 meant that the struggle for supremacy going on between the Hindus and the Muslims, in the words of Girdhar Lal Jain, was decided in favour of the Hindus in three-fourths of India. The Hindus were very much conscious of the change in the ground situation. This consciousness went on swelling gradually as the Constituent Assembly (CA) progressed in framing of the Constitution. During the initial years, Congress leaders took decisive steps to undermine the Sikhs and Sikhism.

- As part of M.K. Gandhi's regular diatribes against the Sikhs in his daily prayer meetings, the Punjab Governor had a circular issued by a Sikh Home Secretary over the head of Sikh Home Minister in East Punjab Government, terming the Sikh people as robbers, marauders, rapists, rascals, to be taken special care of. This came to light in mid 1949.

In furtherance of M.K. Gandhi's pronouncements terming the Sikhs as Hindus and advising the Sikhs to tonsorise their *keshas* and disown the Khalsa way of living, the Government of India :

- i.) withdrew the Army Regulations, extant since the days of East India Company, making the Khalsa way of living mandatory for the Sikh soldiers in the armed forces; and
- ii.) started the process of discrimination against the Sikhs in the army and civil services, favouring those who had discarded *keshas*, or induced them to do so. Those in distress even saw Baba Kharak Singh, then in Nehru's favour, for redressal of their grievances, to no effect.

After Gandhi's murder, Nehru exerted pressure on Sardar Patel, who at one time had talked of PEPSU as Sikh Homeland, to confront the Sikhs and their leader Master Tara Singh, who was arrested on flimsy grounds. Patel wanted Tara Singh to abandon the idea of independent entity of *Panth* for gaining his freedom, which he spurned. The bitterness had its impact on the penultimate session of the Constituent Assembly. The agreed provisions of the Constitution were reopened and the Sikhs were subjected to taste 'majoritarian' democracy. The CA by the time of final session was fully in a revivalist and hilarious mood. The Hindu members contended that there were no minorities now left in India. The Constitution did not have the term 'secular' either in the preamble or in the text. Large numbers of Sikhs from Scheduled Castes in U.P. and other parts of India, denied the benefits accruing to them under the new Constitution, discarded the Sikh faith, and relapsed into Hinduism. About 2,00,000 (two *lakh*) did so in U.P. alone.

- Sardar Patel's discovering 6 Sikhs out of 8 Army Generals in a parade at Ambala Cantt. led to the decisions :

- i.) never to make a Sikh an Army Chief, whatever the merits of the man; and
- ii.) reduction of Sikhs in the army gradually. After Nehru's China war, the decision to increase the strength of the armed forces led to increased induction of the Sikhs and Punjabis, as the bulk of men from Hindi belt UP, MP, Bihar, etc., were not willing to offer themselves for recruitment. This went on till the emergency, when the trend was reversed, and quota-based recruitment from the provinces resulted in reduction of the Sikh content in the army, now to under four percent.

- Nehru at first toyed with the idea of using the nationalist Sikhs, a nebulous entity, to confront the Akalis, but under advice of Sardar Patel started playing up pseudo-Nirankaris, Namdharis, Radha Soamis of various brands, and a host of *Sants, deradars*, to damage the basics of Sikhism and widen the schism.
- At cultural level, Punjabi Hindus, who started thinking themselves as part of the ruling race, disowned their mother-tongue. This helped to sharpen and intensify the contradictions between the Hindus and the Sikhs, who being an infinitesimal minority in India, were at the receiving end.

It were these very considerations, which by 1950 made Khushwant Singh, in his book *The Sikhs* (London, Allan and Unwin, 1951) to surmise that Sikhism would cease to exist by end of the century, to the glee of Nehru that the policies he was pursuing were correct and should be persisted in. Nehru's policies and attitude-towards linguistic reorganisation of Punjab was a case in point. At the height of Punjabi Suba agitation in 1960-61, he chalked out a blueprint which came quite handy to Indira in post-emergency period, to annihilate the Sikhs and make them irrelevant as a factor in Indian polity.

This brings us to the current phase, how Indira after Akalis standing up to her almighty emergency and excesses that went by it, sowed the seeds of armed insurgency as a factor in Sikh polity. I have documented it in *The Sikhs in History*, and its ramifications thereafter. It was simply a case of state terrorism: how the various intelligence set-ups propped up various militant groups, and later, how those involved in organising the Sikh pogrom in 1984 were given state protection. It is only since last year or so, that some of them are facing the truth. Sessions Judge, Delhi, S.N. Dhingra has spoken that eloquently.

The period of a decade and a half since Indira's second term in 1980 has been the worst period for the Sikhs as a people since the days of Ahmad Shah Abdali in mid 18th century. If during Bhindranwale's days keeping unshorn *keshas*, with a flowing beard and a *kesri* turban had ruled the roost, tonsorising of the *keshas*, with or without a *patka*, became a fashion after army, para-military and Punjab Police had gained an upper hand over a simulated militancy, sustained in duplicity by official agencies. As a result, as observed by Harpreet Singh (*Hindustan Times* 4th May, 1994), the Sikh youth, the school and college going boys in large numbers, were "getting their hair shorn and beard shaved off... to convey to the police that they had nothing to do with militancy or Sikh struggle". This caused growth of apostasy in a major way among the Sikh youth. It also had its impact outside Punjab in cowardicing the Sikhs in Delhi, Bonibay and all over India. It hit the Khalsa's concept of

charhdi kala, loftiness of spirit, especially when the Sikhs found the official machinery to be non-responsive, discriminatory and oppressive. It had its impact on Punjab Police, manned mainly by the Sikhs, who too tonsorised their *keshas* and donned *patkas*. The worst part of it was that drug was reintroduced in Punjab under the patronage of official agencies to take within its compass the Sikh youth.

The quantum of official rapaciousness could be judged from the news about the wealth generated by some officials holding top positions in Punjab. In the words of Kamaljeet Rattan (*Economic Times* 14th November, 1994), they had purchased their position and milched it. The victims invariably have been the Sikh households, with some of the Sikh policemen, who have excelled in fratricide, also being the beneficiaries. The damage caused to the Sikh *Panth* this way is beyond comprehension.

III

This brings us to the internal state of the *Panth*, and delineate the rot that has set in, particularly with regard to apostasy.

The Singh Sabha Movement had propelled the *Panth* to a course of action that led to the liberation of the Gurdwaras from *Mahants* culminating in the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925. Thereafter, the Khalsa Schools and Colleges kept the youth in harness and produced in them a sense of belonging, dignity and pride. To be a Khalsa was a high watermark in society.

The decolonisation of the sub-continent, with Hindus emerging as rulers after a millenium, and with Sikhs being at the receiving end of the rod, needed a thorough re-examination of the basic postulates of Sikh society — how to survive in a hostile socio-political environment. Guru Nanak had repudiated all the essentials of Hinduism, and earned eternal hostility of Brahminism. It was unfortunate, under the guise of electoral politics during the last four decades of British rule, the Sikhs forgot the essentials of their *dharma* and philosophy. Earlier, under the guise of amity, Brahmins had infiltrated the fold of Khalsa in mid 18th century, and presented Khalsa as the sword arm of a decadent and decrepit Hinduism, while they busied themselves in dismantling the essentials of Khalsa brotherhood. Brahminical formulations continued to colour the Sikh mind. M.A. Jinnah was not wrong when on eve of the Indian independence, he told Sir Sobha Singh, "Sardar Bahadur, you had the Hindu only as your co-slave. Now you will know the real Hindu when he becomes your master and you become his slave". Did the Sikh people have the correct perspective? At least, the leadership was devoid of understanding, or was quite 'innocent'.

Maharaja Yadvendra Singh of Patiala in 1948 talked of deep frustration having set in the Sikh youth, who felt desperate. This led to strengthening of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), founded in 1945 in Lahore as a nursery of the Sikh faith. But, by and large, in the name of amity, the Sikh Schools and Colleges lowered their guards and became complacent. As if by a magic wand, they ceased to care for the Sikh seedling; *dharmak* education was stopped and *dharampothis* that imparted the fundamentals of Sikhism to children came into disuse.

The Akali leadership was involved in a series of fruitless *morchas*, with Harimandar Sahib and Akal Takht as fulcrums of agitation. The *dharam parchar* was inadequate in view of the mounting onslaught of the state and a hostile society.

Some effort was made to retrieve the situation. Founding of Guru Harkrishan Public Schools in Delhi and Punjab was a step in the right direction. This needs to be augmented. The beginnings can be made by imparting nursery education to young toddlers in Sikh environment, and reactivating the existing Sikh schools and colleges on the old pre-1947 model.

The importance of dedicated Sikh teachers to impart modern and correct education cannot be over-emphasised.

In 1970s, Prof. A.M. Khusro of Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, conducted a survey about the state of Muslim teachers in Government-aided, public and private institutions in Delhi. The results were startling. This survey was published in *The Hindustan Times*, in one of its Sunday supplements. That made the writer, then a senior Government official and President of a Residents Association (for a decade), to conduct a similar survey, though for obvious reasons, it was not possible for him to have got published the results of his survey. Involved in the process were Government-aided schools run by Hindu denominational institutions : DAV Schools, Ramjas Schools, Sanatan Dharma Schools on the one hand, and those run by Sikh denominational institutions : run by Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, some private Sikh bodies and Guru Harkrishan Public Schools on the other hand, all in Delhi. The writer found that not a single member of the minority communities — Sikh, Muslim or Christian — was employed in any of the Hindu denominational institutions. The Sikh schools, on the other hand, had staff coming from other faiths, mainly Hinduism : the content varied from 10% to 30%. Some of them had no understanding of Sikhism, whatsoever. In those days, a *bania* in our neighbourhood, who used to have morning walk with me, startled me one morning by graphically narrating how his 'step-daughter' had been employed as a teacher in a Khalsa School, after he paid 'donation' to the President of the School, who

was also President of the local Gurdwara. That may have been an isolated case. But such type of behaviour is possible with the Sikhs who are willing to sell the Guru *Panth* for lucre. I do not say that it is not possible with Hindus, who have been found selling the secrets of their country, but their educational bodies have withstood the test of the time.

Recently, at the annual family get-together of the staff members of S(ri) G(uru) T(egh) B(ahadur) Khalsa College (Evening), University of Delhi, a non-Sikh member of the teaching staff of 15 years standing, was asked to answer three questions. The first question: Who was Guru Tegh Bahadur, in whose name the College was named? This was followed by hushed silence. There was no point in asking further questions about essentials of Sikhism, or being a Khalsa. If that is the state of knowledge, or lack of it, of a member of the teaching staff, what could be that of the students?

The management of a leading Sikh Public School outside Punjab and Delhi told me that they were finding it difficult to locate an appropriate *Gursikh* to head the institution. Hence, they were having a *patit* as Principal. That is, I am told, also the situation with some other Sikh schools.

Some of the Sikh Public Schools have bobbed-hair non-Sikh women-teachers on their staff. What sort of impact can that have on the students? I am not saying that Sikh teachers — men or women — are embodiment of virtue or lead a *pucca* Sikh life to inspire their students.

There is need to reexamine the entire school system, and give it a direction, a new orientation and motivation. Retired people from Armed Forces Educational Corps is one ready source and is already being utilised. Production of ideal teachers at our own institutions should be on the top of the agenda. *Gurmat Vidyalyas* need a better input, even at the risk of producing some more Pashaura Singhs.

IV

Then comes the question of infiltration of Communists in the Sikh institutions, especially Colleges and Universities. This type of infiltration is encouraged by state authorities, as, of late, the Communist Parties have been collaborating with the ruling Congress at political level. That has been part of political windfall for them. The Communists will continue to play mischief in mis-interpreting Sikhism, Sikh institutions and ideals. Communists have been a constant factor in Sikh affairs. In pre-1947 period, their *Desh Bhagat* Board participated in every Gurdwara election, with no better results. Sometimes, Akalis and Congress combined to defeat them in Assembly elections. In post-1947 era, they have gained in strength. They fought in collaboration with Akalis the 1954 Gurdwara elections when they won over 30 seats in a

house of 140, not an inconsiderable number. The Shiromani Akali Dal, in a moment of weakness, allocated them seats, also because the Communists were supporting Akalis on Punjabi Suba issue.

Because of merger of Akali Dal with the Congress in 1956, the CPI fought the 1957 elections to the Punjab Assembly as the main opposition party. It got 18% of the votes polled in Punjabi region. That led it to draw the conclusion that its future lies in destruction of Shiromani Akali Dal. A section of CPI in Punjab was verily known as Red Akalis, and eventually constituted the CPI (Marxists), with Harkishan Singh Surjeet as Secretary. The importance of Surjeet lies in the fact that he masterminded the infiltration strategy. He was one of the greatest beneficiaries of CPI's collaboration with Akalis in first entering Punjab Assembly with their support from Nakodar constituency. Later, in 1978, the Akalis gifted him a seat to Rajya Sabha. Surjeet, over the time, has singularly pursued the line to make a mass communist movement in Punjab "through the ruins of Akali Dal" (Gurharpal Singh, *Communism in Punjab*, Delhi, 1994).

The *Desh Bhagat* Board members in S.G.P.C. collaborated with Partap Singh Kairon, and helped in ousting Master Tara Singh from Presidentship of S.G.P.C. in annual election in late 1950s. They fought the 1959 Gurdwara elections in collaboration with the Congress set-up, Sadh Sangat Board. Both were routed. The split in Akali Dal in 1960s gave the Communists and the Congressites a great fillip in infiltrating the Sant Akali Dal. They constituted a solid falanx giving them a distinct advantage in 1965 Gurdwara elections.

The disintegration of Soviet Union and overthrow of communist régimes in East Europe has administered body blows to the communist movement, but the communists in India still have potential for mischiefs. So long as Surjeet is active and kicking, it shall continue. So would his control over the elements that infiltrated Akali Dal from the Communist Party.

So far as the Sikh polity is concerned, it is debatable whether the Sikh leaders know the extent of infiltration. The moot point is whether the Comrades in Akali Dal or SGPC have, as of now, overwhelming commitment to the Communist connection, or to the Sikh faith. The answer will vary from one person to another. If the commitment is not complete, *dharam parchar* cannot be carried on and apostasy contained.

V

The Sikh *Panth* is facing today an onslaught from the *Sant Samaj* which is out to undermine the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* and Sikh identity. Image

worship will not take long to degenerate to idol worship. Various types of people, some having the supreme interest of *Panth* at heart, have, of late, aligned with Sant Samaj or sought its blessings to oust the control of Akali Dal (Badal), or more specifically, that of Tohra over the SGPC. One is not sure how far these elements understand the basics of the issues involved. Wrong means or seeking help of wrong persons won't and can't lead to right results. To remove one perceived evil, one need not take recourse to another potential evil. Two wrongs don't make a right. Frustration, however, can cause strange bed fellows.

The onslaught of Sant Sucha Singh of Jawaddi Kalan led to Akal Takht's intervention and holding the Vishwa Sikh Samellan under the aegis of Akal Takht in September, 1995. The decision to establish World Sikh Council is neither here nor there, as the persons coopted at the outset cater to the interests of all sorts of people including Congressites, Comrades, toadies, fellow travellers, sychophants, mercenaries — all sorts of doubtful characters — without a deeper commitment to the Sikh faith. Nothing good can be expected from a body devoid of dedication. It can develop into a powerful body to further the Sikh ideals only if it consists of people with deep commitment to Sikhism.

VI

Experience in USA and Canada has shown that holding *Gurnat* Camps of young students is one of the sure means of inculcating the Sikh spirit in the growing child. A psychiatrist practising in New York, in talks with the writer last year, attributed the *Gursikh* orientation of his grown-up children to their attending *gurnat* camps in their school and college days. The experience can be repeated in India with advantage.

Hill spots are ideal for holding such camps, especially those with historic gurdwaras. Sites for summer and winter camps can be earmarked and developed.

Another factor that has to be kept in mind is that army employment, so far as the Sikh youth is concerned, is out. Our educational institutions should equip them in professional, technical and commercial subjects to stand up later in life as self-employed units playing positive role in society. We may have to emulate Namdharis, who boycotted Government service, in that.

We have been talking of Vaisakhi of 1999 and of our objectives, now for quite some time. Unless we take some concrete steps to galvanise the Sikh society and take measured steps, we shall only be groping in the dark. The forthcoming elections to the Punjab Assembly early next year provide an opportunity to sweep aside a hostile government and regain the initiative lost

in boycotting the 1992 elections. Bulk of Punjab Police, criminalised beyond redemption, shall need to be demobilised. George Fernades' Bill in the last session of Parliament for abolition of Indian Police Service Cadre, and making the police force responsible to the local authority as in USA and some other countries, has much to commend itself. The process can at least start in Punjab.

VII

The alignments of the Sikh leadership, and the clash of personalities that came up during the course of Gurdwara elections, October 1996, only help one to reiterate the fractured nature of Sikh polity. It needs considerable pruning. That is not possible in the given circumstances of polity providing *halwa-manda* to a lot of the people. The silver lining lies in the decision taken by Akali Dal (Badal) not to permit those elected to the S.G.P.C. to take part in the political activity. This should be strictly enforced. The S.G.P.C. members should rededicate themselves to the cause of *dharm prachar*, and help in achieving the objectives set forth in the *Chetna Lehar*. For that, Jathedar Akal Takht also shall have to play a more active role and monitor the progress towards reversing the tide of apostasy that has afflicted the Sikh youth, especially since the induction of Beant Singh puppet government, and atrocities committed by army, para-military forces and Punjab Police over the period.

Seen in wider context, what the Sikhs are facing today in a resurgent India is part of worldwide phenomenon, the growth of violence against religious, ethnic, racial and cultural minorities. The treatment being meted out now for three quarters of a century to Catholic minority in Northern Ireland by the Britishers, the world's oldest living democracy, is a classic example. The French in Canada, despite two centuries of partnership and living together, failed to vote for separation and independence, by less than 1% in the referendum held last year, thanks to the presence of sizeable immigrant community. The Kurds have been at the receiving end from everyone — Iraq, Iran, Turkey. Yugoslavia, on splitting up, saw religious and ethnic violence on a large scale. That was also the case in Central Asia on dissolution of the Soviet Union. Nearer home, violence against Muhajirs and Shias in Pakistan, and Tamils in Sri Lanka has become endemic. Caste conflict in India has the potential to destroy the national fibre : communal and regional antagonisms are getting intensified. Churehill's prophecy, made on the eve of decolonisation of the subcontinent, is ringing loud bells of fulfilment, pointing to a gruesome disaster. Seen in that context, the Sikhs need an enlightened leadership, of which, alas, there is no sign yet. ***

CANADIAN SIKH YOUTH

Sardar Narindar Singh*

A steady and inexorable process of Canadianization is expected by the rising Sikh generation. The elders see their children growing away from them. They expect the young to fulfil the ambitions of their parents and remain identifiable members of the Sikh community. There is no set-up in the Canadian school system to impart education in the environment of Sikh cultural values. The tensions between young and old are the product of the rapidly changing, complex, and varied Western society in which we live. For survival in this society, both parents have to work outside their home for longer hours, as a result of which they get very little time to spend with their children.

There is a communication gap between the young and old, but for the Punjabis it is aggravated since the language at home is totally different from that of school and work. Canadian-born Sikh children are not fluent in Punjabi because English has played an important role in their lives at an early age. The media promote a loosening of moral attitudes and a closely knit family faces fundamental threats to social life. Even the indoctrination of Sikh religious teachings cannot shield children from the influence of television and from the fact that young people can have economic independence. Sikh parents have been conscious of differences in outlook between themselves and their children raised in North America. They fear the influence of North American cultural values, which conflict with Sikh values. The reasons for conforming to the ways of Canadians seem so obvious that it is regarded as a foregone conclusion that the second and third generations will move inevitably towards total 'Westernization'. To many Sikh parents, the outside influences on their children's behaviour seem so powerful that they feel unable to counter their effect, and they are driven to resignation, accepting the 'Westernization' of their children as inevitable.

The Canadian Sikh youth feel disturbed and confused by the conflict of cultures. They are being constantly bombarded with images of violence, sex, drugs, crime, etc., through the mass media. They lack a sense of identity. The primary Sikh institution, the gurdwara, does not interest them. Since gurdwaras do not cater for their needs, Western society's lure of materialistic values is drawing them away from the Sikh values. Different Sikh religious sects also are targeting the Sikh teenagers and weaning them away from the

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mainstream gurdwaras, a trend most disturbing. Parents are partly to blame for this drift. It does not bother the gurdwaras as to why the youth is staying away. No attempt is being made to arrest the situation and entice them back. We should raise the Sikh youth from the mainstream institutions to act as role models. The indoctrination of the Sikh youth by the followers of religious sects should be treated as a taboo.

With the exception of teaching at home and weekend schools, parents have few resources to ward off the impact on Sikh children of those Western values, which are incongruent with Sikh values. At home, parents attempt to establish parent-child relationships on traditional lines such as strict obedience to their authority, and try to keep their children away from social situations that could threaten Sikh values, particularly the girls from dating. The dating restrictions are enforced rigidly. Most children marry along traditional lines in arranged marriages, and virtually all daughters do so. Even sons marry within their parents' expectations. To many it appears that inter-racial marriage would signal the end of the family line. Parents expect their children to marry within their own community and have continued to search for marriage partners in the Punjab. This trend has considerably changed. For reasons of compatibility, parents presently are engaged in searching for marriage partners within Canada and the United States.

North American culture predominates at work, in the schools, in government and in the media. Community institutions are the only organizational responses to the non-Sikh cultural values to which the growing child is exposed. Depending upon the size of the community, many gurdwara management committees provide a range of educational and cultural programs in the form of lectures; *kirtan* (devotional singing), and *katha* (exposition). The introduction of Punjabi language classes for children ensures capacity to read and write Punjabi, which is vital for children's retention of Sikh religion and culture. Language being the great reservoir of cultural meaning, the Sikhs lay great stress in learning Gurmukhi (script for writing Punjabi), not only because Sikh religious texts are written in Gurmukhi, but also because it appears at all religious functions and it also opens the way for deeper appreciation of Sikh religion, history and culture. Some Sikh societies provide Sunday schools where formal instructions in the tenets of Sikh faith are imparted to children.

Sikh children often meet with hostility and discrimination, especially after they leave school. They fall back on their families and communities, and begin to assert their distinctiveness with all the enthusiasm of converts in a revival. Teenagers are expected to be at home in the evenings, studying or attending classes, and if they stay out late with friends, this is frowned upon.

Some parents employ private tutors. For a Sikh child, Punjabi is the code that he or she needs in order to function in his or her immediate environment of family and community. Punjabi is the spoken language at home, and is backed by the strong religious conviction of parents and well-established religious institutions. Children generally become believers of the Sikh faith.

The Sikh children are heirs to a rich and flourishing culture. The Punjab is an exciting place that enjoys remarkable progress in agriculture and in light industries. In history, it was a meeting place of civilizations. The Golden Temple (Sikh "Vatican") at Amritsar is an object of serious consideration amongst the great religions of the world. Sikh culture has a wealth of story, music, dance, costume, and cuisine that are elements in the home life of Sikh children. Yet, many of these children attend schools where these things, which could enable Sikh children to feel that they have something to give and be proud of are never mentioned.

Sikhs have started *kirtan* (devotional singing) through music classes in gurdwaras or community centres. Parents facilitate better understanding of subjects by teaching children at home. A week to two week youth camps provide religious orientation to Sikh youth ranging from history of Sikh Gurus, role of Sikh Institutions, *Gurbani* recitation, *kirtan*, music, workshops, group discussions, Punjabi sports, camp fires and several motivating incentives.

These *Gurnat* camps provide rigorous training and discipline to the Sikh youth from 5 am to 11 pm, while imparting fundamentals of Sikh religion. The children are considered supreme. The teachers and *sewadars* are at the disposal of the children virtually twenty four hours. Apart from the normal load of lectures, the teachers respond to indepth queries of gifted youth, and *sewadars* tend to different needs of the children ranging from combing their hair, preparation of meals, first-aid and counselling, etc. This all-embracing program attempts to impart knowledge on basic Sikh attitudes and beliefs, on religious matters like *Akal Purukh* (Supreme Being), the nature of the Absolute, the meaning of *Naam* (Will, *Shabad* or Word) and the importance of *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book), and on social and moral matters like the idea of the family, the privileges and duties of its members and the relationship between parents and children, which are delicate matters and form part of the personality of each child. At this impressionable age, the children derive the greatest benefit. The process is designed to educate the Sikh youth and plant the seed of Sikhism so that they become the torch-bearers when the present generation passes on from the scene.

The present youth camp system should be further strengthened and the community must ensure that all Sikh children go through this process.

Less than 3% of children attend the *Gurnat* camps. We have a long way to go. A central Sikh organization should co-ordinate the activities of youth camps, and standardize texts and curriculum. No youth camp should be organized without the active participation of dedicated family members. It is an immense responsibility for *Akal Purakh's* children and should not be taken lightly.

Khalsa schools are being set up. Students have set up a world-wide computer network for communications among themselves. Even internet is being established. Punjabi fonts have been developed with commercially available word processors. Radio and T.V. shows are quite popular forms of entertainment, promoting Punjabi culture in the form of folk dances and folk songs. Their cultural influence is increasing rapidly and Sikh youth is fascinated by their heritage. More and more Canadians are getting exposed to Punjabi food, music, and dance and gaining a greater awareness of people of Punjabi origin.

Sikhs in Canada are constantly fighting for the retention of their identity. They have a strong identity, an ethically grounded faith, a rich culture and a sense of their own being. Religion is a vital factor, an innate strength of the Sikh community, and at stake is the preservation of Sikh culture and identity. There is a reasonable chance of survival of Sikh identity in Canada. It is the Sikh youth we have to target. The Sikh youth possesses both weaknesses and strengths. We should endeavour to check their weaknesses and give them a free hand to exercise their strengths. However, we must ensure that they remain on the right track. The youth must be called upon to follow the higher path of ethical and spiritual conduct provided by the Sikh Gurus.

Sikh scholars still have not generated authentic material on their history, traditions and present way of life, although humble beginnings have been made. The material needs to be grasped. The community has made no concerted efforts to find plausible solutions to the problems facing the Sikh youth. Community institutions must ensure that Sikh identity is preserved in the youth and the youth feels pride in being a Sikh, and the knowledge and the practice of the essentials of the faith are instilled in them. We must ensure that the Sikh youth is appropriately moulded, groomed and equipped with Sikh cultural values. The future lies with the children. The problems must be addressed at children's level. Parents have to play a major role and would involve educating the parents as well. Youth camp participation is one of the most effective measures for the long-drawn out fight for the preservation of Sikh identity.

The Sikh community may organize moral instructions and divinity classes, which could take the form of competitions in elocution and essay-writing on Sikh themes. Experts could deliver special lectures on Sikh themes, on important doctrines and practices of Sikh religion at seminars and workshops. Libraries and reading rooms should be set up. Scholarships and grants should be awarded to deserving and to needy students. Sikhs' interaction with the host society should commence with participation in interfaith activities, and by conveying and practising the Sikh concern for fellow beings. Sikhs should fight for freedom and equality for all, and against oppression everywhere.

There is a need for English newspapers and magazines dealing with Sikh history, religion and socio-political issues. More Khalsa schools should be set up and eventually Sikh colleges and universities must be established. Apart from lack of information, there is actually a great deal of disinformation about Sikhs and Sikh religion. Sikhs must, therefore, set up institutions where facts and relevant data can be collected, information disseminated and erroneous propaganda challenged. They should establish 'prestigious Sikh journals of international standing in North America, not only to correct baseless allegations, but also to provide facts and figures and promote the education of Sikhism. Sikh millionaires should come forward to finance these journals and programs which are urgently required and let distinguished Sikh scholars contribute free of charge to the contents of these journals.

- Sikh scholars should develop the intelligent rationale of the spirit of Sikh religion for the purpose of imparting it to Sikh children, and also for training competent teachers, who should form part of the education system of Canada. They should be entrusted with educating Sikh children and should become the nucleus of an excellent foundation for Canadian born Sikhs.

Sikh community institutions should aim at harnessing the talents of Sikh youth. The community should endeavour to direct its resources for creating positive environments. Such conducive conditions will attract the Sikh youth to play a constructive role that will make a difference. Niches should be created not only in the government structure, but in all walks of Canadian society. They need to set up such institutions that would train Sikh youth as lawyers, writers, politicians, academicians and other professionals expected to form vital components of the Canadian power structure.

Sikhs need to set their own house in order. Let them make sure that their institutions, particularly gurdwaras, are models of decorum and not arenas for the battle of personal egos. At present we are far away from achieving this objective. When youth observes what goes on in our primary

institutions, they stay away from them. There is a pressing need in Canada to undertake additional constructive work in education and other areas. There is a need for a resurgence in Sikh studies. Selfless and dedicated Sikh workers should organize to devote their energies towards the enormous task of building the Sikh community on a solid footing, which tantamounts to moulding the Sikh youth. We should also educate non-Sikh Canadians about the fundamentals of Sikhism. This indirectly would assist in solving some of the racial problems facing the Sikh youth.

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TO SALVAGE OUR ETHOS, SALVAGE THE YOUTH*

Prof. Kulraj Singh

The situation of the Sikhs today is, to put it mildly, most dismal. Sikhism signifies both an ideology and the people who practise it. I wish to underscore the factum of the two being inseparable co-relatives, the survival of one being dependent on the survival of the other.

Thanks to the innate vitality of the Sikh ideology and the tradition which it generated, the Sikhs have dominated many spheres of the Indian subcontinent's life. As a people, they have been leagues ahead of others in agriculture, sports, defence services, engineering, professions, collective initiative and philanthropy. There was a time when Sikhs and sports were synonymous. When India became independent, Sikhs constituted close to 30% of armed forces; a majority of the army generals were Sikhs. It was not just an accident that the Green Revolution was initiated by the Sikh farmers. Nor indeed was it an accident that the Sikhs were capable of massive political mobilisation and were a factor to reckon with in India's politics in spite of being a microscopic minority.

MORAL DECLINE

All that has changed. You look in vain for a turbaned man among the Indian athletes today. A Milkha Singh or Pargat Singh is a rarity among Indian athletes and sportsmen. And where some Sikhs manage to move closer to the top, they cease to be Sardars. How many Sikhs are army Generals today? How many Sikh children have received bravery awards since the institution of these awards? Is heroism dead among the Sikhs, who have traditionally fought for other people's rights and for protecting them? The one-time Punjab's political colossus, the Akali Dal, is reduced to near prostration, unable to launch a respectable protest march to Delhi against wanton infringement of human rights in Punjab. The Akali Dal was never so spineless in its seventy-five years' lifespan.

But a far more disturbing aspect of the current Sikh situation is the widespread moral decay. The past ten years have not only been an era of social and political upheaval in Punjab, they have been a period of moral decline also. Whether there was a genuine militant movement in Punjab is

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debatable. If there was one, it was hijacked by thugs, who behind the facade of militancy, indulged in extortion, rape and senseless killing. No genuine Sikh militant ideologue could have acquiesced in these acts, or condoned them. That no effective voice of protest against these acts of extortion, rape and senseless killing arose from among the militants is an index of the real content of the so-called Sikh militancy. In such wanton acts, the Punjab police which, at least at the field level, was composed largely of Sikhs, equalled if not excelled the so-called militants. The outrages committed by the police did not get fully exposed simply because the top brass afforded protection to criminal policemen in the name of morale or as the report goes, they were very often partners in the loot. A friend who approached a police official for the release of a seized youth in lieu of a less heavy ransom, tells me that he believed the concerned policemen could not do anything because the money had to go up all along the hierarchical line. Whatever else this phenomenon may indicate, it does reflect widespread addiction to easy money and collapse of moral constraints. These two deadly ills have eaten into the vitals of the community, as well as the individuals who are its constituents. Redeeming the errant Sikhs and their progeny from the effects of their sins will be a formidable task.

A by-no-means less distressing phenomenon during this period of travail has been the Sikhs' wholly un-Sikh submission to high-handedness and repression. When the daughter of a Sikh in the neighbourhood was raped, no one came to her help. Nor did the Sikhs of the locality get together to fight off the evil men. That is the depth of cowardice.

But it becomes infinitely more depressing when it is realised that those who claim to be leaders of the Sikhs, who control vast institutional resources and who are never tired of proclaiming that in Sikhism religion and politics cannot be separated, are totally blind to the fact that current scenario threatens the very survival of Sikhism.

VULNERABILITY OF MINORITIES

Ethnic and cultural groups survive so long as they are keenly aware and proud of their ethnicity, culture and tradition; otherwise they die out. This is more true of ethnic and cultural minorities which, like the Sikhs, live in the midst of quicksands of majority cultures. The danger to the existence and identity of minority cultures is much greater unless : (a) they are, and continue to remain, determinedly aligned to their cultures; (b) the individuals composing the cultural group, singly and as a corporate organism, possess superior strength of character; and (c) their successive generations are made to imbibe the parent culture through well-planned education. Extinction of

minorities which have lacked these qualities has been a recurrent historical phenomenon.

SLIDE DOWN IN LIFE STYLE

It is for this reason that the Sikhs need to understand the implications of the sporting Sikh youth suddenly taking to the wearing of peak cap and the Sikh ladies conducting their deliberations, in the course of the Sikh Educational Conferences, with their sashes off their heads. This is not wilful apostasy. This is the natural consequence of the dual phenomenon of the Sikh youth being totally unaware of the Sikh tradition against the wearing of caps, and there being no models currently worth imitating. For want of these, the Sikh youth pander to their urge for flaunting their importance by aping an odd Navjot Singh Sidhu willing to wear helmet, but not a turban.

What is observed today is the thin edge of the wedge. Exposed as we are to cultural assaults by the *Ramayanas* and *Mahabharatas* telecast by India's TV and many subtler items daily shown by the media, as also the trashy stuff carried by the world audio-visual media, the Sikhs may soon begin to look upon the essentials of their culture as so many redundancies. The process of conversion is likely to be speedier than apprehended, because we are not imparting any education to our youths to counter the effects of the cultural invasion. There are hardly any Sikh celebrities around to boost the Sikh self-esteem and the one body — the Akali Dal — that has for decades been the nursery of models of Sikhism has not only lost credibility but become a laughing stock.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

Considering the conduct of and the mental calibre displayed by the Old Guard to expect them to take corrective action sounds foolish. The current Sikh adversity has thrown up innumerable issues. Any one of them, or more, could provide the foundation of formidable political organisation and actions. The rise in face of such stark calamity — which, let it not be forgotten, is a common calamity — of thirteen or more rival Akali Dals and many more "crusading outfits" is an index of the wisdom and sincerity of those who control the destiny of Sikhism today. While the world is entering the age of supercomputers, supersonic speed and biological revolution through genetic engineering, the captains of our destiny cannot muster enough sense to frustrate the designs of an inimical political set-up, and are feuding over chief ministership of Punjab which, even a man in the street knows, cannot be secured by the methods they have chosen. What is worse, they have learnt no lessons from their continuing frustrations.

MEETING THE MENACE

It is this crucial fact that underscores the desirability of the Sikhs stopping to rely on the Old Guard for salvaging Sikh culture and identity, and launching independent action — preferably with their blessing and, if need be, without it. The Old Guard would hopefully not deny its blessing to the new initiative because it is launched to achieve what they have all along stood for — fusion of "religion", i.e., morality in "politics", i.e., good governance. Only the new initiative would adopt the wider meaning of the two terms : spirituality (religion) and the whole gamut of secular life (politics) including education, sports, development of personality, employment and pursuit of democratic rights. The Old Guard may even be persuaded to believe that such initiative will strengthen their constituency, as indeed it will.

INTER SE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

Since our primary objective is salvaging Sikhism, it appears necessary that before unfolding our plan for achieving that, we examine the structure of the ideology and the *inter se* importance of its various contents because that is crucial to achieve our objective. Continuing with the symbolic terms, religion and politics, and endorsing the proposition that, for the full flowering of man's personality and ideal socio-political order, we must, for the success of the paramount human endeavour — pursuit of general human happiness — fix the *inter se* position of the two. Sikhism and the Sikhs seem to be hurtling downhill, because among them politics has become supreme and religion has become its instrument. For the Sikhs' own good, it should be the other way round. Religion's aim is to fashion (build) the man, politics is one of the many instruments such as education, sports, recreation, etc., to do that. The concern of religion is the whole man and man's well-being. The concern of politics is the provision of a socio-political set-up to contribute to the growth and well-being of man. This being the basic postulate, conceding to politics supremacy over religion would inevitably subvert the philosophy and process of the pursuit of the good of man. The stunning failure of the present day Sikh politics is directly attributable to this perversion.

HOPE OF REDEMPTION

Coming now to the crucial part of our concern, we must at once recognize that since the men at the helm of the Sikh affairs have proved inadequate and the adult Sikhs may generally have firmed up in their particular moulds, Sikhism can be salvaged only by concentrating on the Sikhs in their formative years by taking charge of their religious education and building their character. In an age when the electronic media keeps the youth nailed to their living-room seats, to the detriment even of their conventional educa-

tion, we shall have to provide something equally attractive to lure them. Such seductive alternative may be a network of youth clubs which caters to both the head and the heart of the youth. These clubs, managed by local adults of proven integrity and ability, and run with local endeavour and finances, reinforced by outside bounty, should provide to the youth of the target age : (a) religious education, preferably through video cassettes; (b) facilities for indoor and outdoor games; (c) training in and the wherewithal for involvement in creative group tasks; and (d) nutritious/delicious fare. However, the full range of club activities may be evolved with the help of psychologists and youth welfare specialists. These latter may also provide the architectural plan for the club building and the appurtenant open area.

CONSTRUCTION OF CLUB BUILDING

The idea may look utopian. But it is not out of the bounds of practicability – certainly not among the Sikhs. You propagate the idea. Then ask for blueprint from social, educational and architectural experts. Considering the widespread Sikh concern about their survival, and the still quite potent impulse for benevolence among the Sikhs, the response to the request for blueprints should be good. When the construction plan is ready, if possible, involve one of the many *sants* guiding some Sikh construction work in or outside Punjab. Argue with them that you are building a "Gurdwara" that will nurse Sikhism in the materially changed environment which has made the traditional gurdwara less alluring. However, if no *sant* is prepared to take up the job, do it with the help of a local committee. Skilled labour for the job may be procured on payment, while the local people, including prospective beneficiaries, should provide the unskilled labour free, or for a token reward. Such construction by itself will be a step for the resurrection of the Sikh ethos. The tradition of *kar-sewa*, voluntary labour, which has been an essential aspect of the Sikh ethos, is dying out or getting perverted among the Sikhs, while it is being exploited elsewhere to boost people. Protection of this tradition and strengthening it would certainly contribute to the vitality of Sikhism. So the construction of the club this way will be a double blessing : it will accomplish a task and it will rejuvenate the Sikh spirit.

The full scope of the religious education, sports training, facilities for games, creative involvement, etc., should be decided upon in consultation with experts. However, to indicate the benefits that will accrue from the youth clubs, some idea of the scope of the projected activities may be given.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To begin with education, instruction will include training in manners and will inculcate the habit of civilised, meaningful discussion and debate.

These seem to be necessary, considering the almost universal prevalence of squabbling among the gurdwara committees. The basic religious education would include biographies of the Gurus, a survey of the Sikh history through episodes that interest young people, knowledge of Sikh tenets and institutions, and viewing of Sikh historical places and gurdwaras. This latter education will be imparted through video cassettes. The reason : well-prepared video narration will be succinct and more effective. Their effect will be enhanced by pictures of the narrated events and objects. Being impersonal narrations, their effect will not be diluted by the narrator's shortcomings. And, most of all, one-time cost over the preparation of the cassettes would save so much labour and expense and would cater to the needs of all youth clubs. The object of this part of the religious education would be to bind the Sikh youth to Sikhism with the silken bonds of the proud Sikh historical tradition.

To sustain their faith, we shall have to initiate the youth into the Sikh ritual which is not only rational but also aesthetically gratifying. They will be taught recitation of scriptures, listening to and performing *kirtan*, the opening and closing of Guru Granth Sahib with proper ceremony and sitting in attendance of the holy book during congregational assemblies. They will be helped to take to the daily recitation of five *banis* which ought to be recited by all Sikhs, initiated or uninitiated.

GAMES AND SPORTS

The Sikhs have games and sports in their blood. If the clubs provide these and other recreational activities, the youth will swarm there. The club may initially provide limited facilities for games and sports, but may subsequently, with the growth of talent, launch more ambitious plans. But the basic role of games and sports in these clubs will mostly be to attract the youth.

It may, incidentally, be observed here that another very effective allurements, which will also be a great aid, is the provision of lessons in English. Considering the craze for English all over Punjab, such lessons will not only be a big attraction, but will also equip an essentially venturesome and mobile community with necessary where-withal for its members' sallies to foreign lands.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Sikhism is not just another contemplation-oriented ideology. Activism has been its basic content. Hence the institution of *langar* (free kitchen), preparation and distribution of soft drinks on Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom day, construction of gurdwaras, even a bridge over the Godavari at Nanded and universal Sikh corporate endeavours to celebrate occasions.

Active work, particularly, active corporative work (call it *sewa*, if you will) is not only a fruitful but also a morally-elevating and socially-satisfying activity. It inculcates, in people, the habit of creative involvement and rallying for a common purpose. These habits, in themselves, are enviable moral qualities.

The Sikhs still cherish active work as a great virtue. But active work among them is now dedicated mostly to religious purposes and construction of gurdwaras, which has virtually become a commercial activity. It has for this reason lost much of its sheen.

Active work (*sewa*) directed to social purposes, like protection of the defenceless at personal risk, would have been a great instrument for the propagation of Sikhism. Imagine digging up channels for the fruitful utilisation of chow water, or construction of a school building or a hospital.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE AGENDA

Punjab, the Sikh homeland, faces many challenges today. Our youth, if organised for voluntary work, could help meet these, even as they learn new trades. They could take up afforestation, upgrading the environment, community service for hygiene, producing biogas, etc., thus obviating the influx of migrant labour that threatens to tilt the Sikh population's balance. In and around Kiratpur and Anandpur Sahib, there are massive earthen mounds. Scientists at PAU have already found verdant plants that can flourish on dry mounds. Why cannot the youth undertake to convert the Gurus' land into a verdant green tract?

INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITY

The beginning of the club itself will be made by creative collective endeavour. Convinced of the benevolent role of the youth club, the *sangat* of the vicinity, where a club is to be established, would be persuaded to muster the resources for the building of the club. The central agency would provide only the guidance, the architectural plans and courses of training for the personnel who will run the clubs. Everything else will be done by the local *sangat* which will set up committees from amongst themselves to collect and manage funds and supervise construction.

The youth clubs would periodically offer popular food items as an additional attraction.

CLUB — A MODERN GURDWARA

It will, on closer thought, be seen that the role of the youth club is practically the same as that of the traditional *dharamsal*. In view of the changed social and educational milieu, it uses different instruments for the

religious education of the Sikh youth and for building their character. It also provides the wherewithal for weaning away the youth from present day media allurements which may pull them off their cultural base. The club is, thus, a modern "gurdwara" providing a much broader education in religion, character building, personality development and constructive social activity in keeping with the basic postulates of a *Gurmukh*.

BRIGHT FUTURE

Those who control Sikhs' destiny today have smothered the whole gamut of institutions held sacred by the Sikhs. They have proved their incapacity to defend the most sacred of the Sikh institutions. A few have cornered most of the Sikh foundations and endowments. Anybody seeking to bring about a change in the existing power structure, as a prelude to bringing about reformation, will be branded "enemy agent". The past two or three years' happenings indicate that it is virtually impossible to remove the blinkers from their eyes and change their attitude and character. If such attitudes continue and infect the younger Sikhs, the fate of our community would be sealed.

Such a contingency can be averted by immediately taking hold of the Sikh youth, hedging them against the baneful influences of the ideas and the attitudes of the present day custodians of Sikhism and the Sikhs and moulding their character according to the lofty Sikh tradition to preserve the beauty of human living that is Sikhism.

Concentrating on youth has the great advantage of avoiding confrontation with vested interests and internecine conflicts — which may prove destructive — and smoothly bringing about a fundamental change — the change in the character of men to ensure a better future. This change will be brought about by the clubs. There seems to be no alternative to such a change or this mode of redemption.

To be vitally alive, Sikhism has to have its roots in the hearts of men and women. Those who advocate social bulwarks for Sikhism forget that these latter can protect the form and not the spirit. And form without spirit is mere illusion. The Sikh youth club will generate the spirit — and steel it. The parents will no longer suffer the trauma of their boys destroying the very signature of Sikhism, the pure long *kesh*, when they go abroad. Because these, then, will be the gift of conviction rooted in unswerving loyalty to Sikh ideals — of being in the image of God.

OPPORTUNISM OF APOSTASY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SIKH HISTORY

Dr Kirpal Singh*

Apostasy among the Sikhs had been a very rare phenomenon. In the whole of 18th century, there is no recorded example of apostasy among the Sikhs. The Muslim writers like Khafi Khan, Qazi Noor Mohammad and others, who were deadly against the Sikhs, bear witness to the steadfastness of Sikhs, who willingly laid down their lives for the sake of their faith. Banda Singh Bahadur and his valiant companions laid down their lives for the sake of faith, turning deaf ear to the offer of worldly pleasures. Bhai Mani Singh, the Saint Paul of the Sikhs and Bhai Taru Singh were tortured to death, but they did not waver in their convictions. They are reverently remembered to this day in the daily prayer in all gurdwaras :

Hail those who meditated in the Name of God
Shared their earnings with others

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿਆ ਵੰਡ ਛਕਿਆ ।

Cut to pieces, boiled alive and did not waver in their faith.

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਠ ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਾਏ ।

ਉਬਲਦੀਆਂ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਬਾਲੇ ਗਏ ।

ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਖੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ।

The opportunism occurred in the Sikh religion with the establishment of Sikh political power, viz., Sikh Kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839) A.D. Guru Gobind Singh, creator of Khalsa, got a big drum and named it *Ranjit Nagara*, which means battle-winning drum. Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to say that he was only a drum of Guru Gobind Singh. He was an enthusiast to patronise the Khalsa form. It is recorded that Ram Lal, a Brahmin nephew of Tej Singh, came to Lahore *darbar*. The Maharaja desired him to take *pahul*, and soon he became Ram Singh after taking *pahul*. He has been mentioned as *Bhaiya* Ram Singh in *Umdatul Tawarikh* — the Diary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Since he had come from Meerut side, he was known as *Bhaiya* Ram Singh. Similar was the case with the Dogras of Jammu, who held eminent positions in the court of Maharaja

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Ranjit Singh. Perhaps, they had never been regularly converted to Sikhism, but they had adopted the Khalsa form to please their boss. Maharaja Ranjit Singh liked beards. Rattan Chand had a beautiful long beard. Maharaja was much impressed and bestowed on him a *Jagir* to maintain his beard. He is known in the history as Rattan Chand Dahriwala. Similarly, European Generals employed by the Maharaja, like Allard and Ventura, had grown beard to please their master. There were different kinds of political adventurers in his court, who held very important positions and kept beards.

After the fall of the Sikh Kingdom, there was a turn in the tide. The political opportunists began to look towards their new masters after discarding the Khalsa symbols. There were large scale desertions in all ranks giving the impression to the Britishers that Sikhism was on its way to extinction, but bulk of the Sikhs under the leadership of Bhai Maharaj Singh and Baba Bikram Singh Bedi of Una continued to fight against the Britishers.

Due to the military quality of the Sikhs, British Government began to patronise the Sikhs. It was ordered that the Sikhs in the army could not discard the Sikh symbols. The introduction of the communal electorates and separate representation given to Sikhs in 1919 also safeguarded the Sikh interests in the public life, and Sikhism flourished during the colonial period of our history. After independence, there has been a growing tendency to discard Sikh symbols.

In independent India, the Government has declared that they will follow a secular policy, which would mean that Government will not favour any religion, nor would it extend patronage to any religious group. Some people believe this secular policy to be a negation of religion which is not correct. Secular policy means that Government will not interfere in the religious affairs of any religious community. All this has very adversely affected the Sikhs. Previously in Khalsa schools, Sikh theology and Sikh history were taught and the Government used to give grants. Now, according to the new policy, Government has been giving 95% grant to all the schools. Khalsa schools have discontinued teaching of Sikh theology and Sikh history, because no grant is paid for religious teachers. It is very important that we make religious instructions part and parcel of the education system, at least in our denominational institutions. This is a very significant aspect to check the growing tendency among the Sikh youth from going astray, because the youth is innocent. They have not been taught the instructions of the Gurus. They have no knowledge about their religion. Their parents are ignorant. So, we have to work among the parents as well as among the youth if we are to check this trend of irreligiousness.

SIKHISM AND STATE PATRONAGE

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the eminent Sikh writers on Sikh history and religion had been advocating that State patronage was essential for Sikhism. Rattan Singh Bhangoo, the well-known author of *Prachin Panth Parkash*, wrote :

ਰਾਜ ਬਿਨਾ ਨ ਧਰਮ ਚਲੇ ਹੈ ।

Religion cannot flourish without political power.

M.A. Macauliffe, the celebrated writer of *The Sikh Religion*, first published in England in 1909, made an elaborate case for the State patronage of Sikhism. He was of the view that no religion could survive without State patronage. He wrote in the lengthy introduction to his book :

"The great Emperor Akbar, by an eclectic process, evolved what he considered a rational religion from Islam, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism, but it perished when it received no support, but rather opposition from his son Jahangir. The religion of the Cross was banished from its parent home of Judaea and supplanted by the religion of the Crescent. Christianity gained in other countries much more than it lost in its own. Organization and the material forces by which it is maintained have obviously contributed to that result.

"The Emperor Akbar's historian, Abul Fazl, very clearly saw the advantage of State support to a religion. He says in his *Ain-i-Akbari* : 'Men of deep insight are of opinion that even spiritual progress among a people would be impossible unless emanating from the king, in whom the light of God dwells'.

"As Buddhism without State support completely lost its hold in India, so it is apprehended that without State support, Sikhism will also be lost in the great chaos of Indian religious systems."

At another place, Macauliffe gives the following argument :

"Truly wonderful are the strength and vitality of Hinduism. It is like the boa constrictor of the Indian forests. When a petty enemy appears to worry it, it winds round its opponent, crushes it in its folds, and finally causes it to disappear in its capacious interior. In this way, many centuries ago, Hinduism on its own ground disposed off Buddhism, which was largely a Hindu reformation; in this way, in a prehistoric period, it absorbed the religion of the Scythian invaders of Northern India; in this way, it has converted uneducated Islam in India into a semi-paganism; and in this way, it is disposing off the reformed and once

hopeful religion of Baba Nanak. Hinduism has embraced Sikhism in its folds; the still comparatively young religion is making a vigorous struggle for life, but its ultimate destruction is, it is apprehended, inevitable without State support."

The Sikh Religion Vol. I, Introduction, p. 55

Master Tara Singh, the famous Sikh leader, with whom the writer of these lines had the opportunity to discuss this problem, was of the same view, viz., Sikhs must have a homeland where Sikhism could flourish.

There is another significant aspect also. The State patronage of the religion will always be welcome to the faithful. But Sikhism has so many merits in itself which are in conformity with the values of the modern scientific age. Democratic in principle — *Sangat* to formation of Khalsa, equality of all human beings without distinction of caste, creed or sex and the universal teaching of the *Adi Guru Granth*, the Sikh scripture, can always stand the test of time, provided the Sikhs make up their mind to make them known to the world. *Daswandh* of all Sikhs can make a good substitute for the State patronage. Organization and material forces, to which Macauliffe has referred, can be created by the Sikhs themselves, if they pool their resources towards the noble cause of spread of Sikhism. In order to awaken the Sikhs to this urgent need, *Gurmata Chetna Lehar* has been recently started. Let us pray and work for its success.

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH — PRINCIPAL CAUSE

Bhagwant Singh Dalawari*

I have been concerned with the problem of Apostasy ever since the Lord changed my own path from hollow show-window exhibition of *Sikhi* to a purposeful following of Guru Granth Sahib. I have witnessed horrendous scenes of external *kakkars* with absolute indifference to the values of Sikhism in practice. I have been aghast at almost a total hiatus between the words and deeds of so-called Sikh-looking persons, *amritdhari* and non-*amritdhari*. And I have hung my head in shame in learning about the acrobatics of *amritdhari Ragi Jathas* wedded to commercialisation and non-observance of Sikh practices in their lives, preaching solemnly in gurdwaras. And finally, the so-called religious, political and even social leaders, inclined to power and pelf, riches and rites, have given, it appears, a licence to the Youth to do whatever they like. And the youth rightly points out :

1. Our elders, talking of and reciting *Gurbani* and lecturing us, are cheats in business, smugglers, hoarders, drunkards in spite of the fact that they outwardly look like Sikhs with their hair and beard intact.
2. Whatever we see around in gurdwaras is generally a quarrelsome atmosphere between this party and that, and sometimes they drag each others' turbans in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib — with their *kirpans* visible in their *gstras*.
3. At home we see the quarrels among our relations for money, for prestige, for dowry, and we also see ill-treatment of daughters-in-law even in *amritdhari* homes.
4. Atmosphere of bribery and corruption in offices, courts and business houses involving *amritdhari* Sikhs is as rampant as in the case of others.
5. We are told to adhere to the principles of Sikhism when our elders themselves are engaged only in lip-service to Sikhism, and present a poor ideal to be followed.

I am sorry and pained to miss the real cause of degeneration of Sikhs — not only the youth, but of all ages — among the causes mentioned in the

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circular inviting people to the Seminar. I am nearly amused that we are always unwilling or unable to pin-point the main cause of our degeneration. We must recall the *ghalugharas*, the fall of Banda Singh Bahadur, the ceaseless *zulam* of Mughal emperors and almost always hostile environment which our forefathers had to face, and then find out the reasons how they always came out with flying colours even if they had to lay down their lives. Their mainstay was the Guru's *bachan*, the Guru's life, the Guru's example, the Guru's ideal and the Guru's exhortation. Today, while we are anxious that our children should not shave off their hair and get absorbed in the Hindu-Brahmin fold, we are anxious that they should keep their identity with a turban and untrimmed beard, but we are not as anxious to ensure that our children have the teachings of their Gurus entrenched in their practical life. Imagine the spectacle of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dyala and Bhai Sati Das cheerfully laying down their lives just as Guru Tegh Bahadur had groomed them by his teachings, and earlier (Guru) Gobind at the age of nine had sacrificed his father for the freedom of worship of Kashmiri Brahmins.

What we need today, in addition to the theoretical teachings enumerated under cures and positive steps, are the practical examples for our young people to watch and emulate. Unfortunately, the so-called religious leaders — divided as they are in different groups and camps — seem to think that religious leadership is a springboard for political advancement with no holds barred as far as the means are concerned. The so-called political leadership may show its Sikh identity with beards and turbans — and to impress the gullible, they may even leave the beards unfurled — but would go all out to employ questionable methods to gain or retain their political positions. Imagine the effect on young minds when the so-called leaders always call others names when our Gurus maintained that a Sikh would follow *Gurbani* :

1. *Ham nahin change bura nahin koe*
2. *Howo subhna ke renka tau aao hamare paas*
3. *Kabir sab te ham bure ham taj bhalo sab koe*
4. *Manda jaane aapka avar bhala sansar*
5. *Aapas te oopar sab jaano tan dargeh sukh pawo*

We somehow have peculiar notions about the greatness of Sikhism. Our Gurus, who established their greatness with deeds, not mere talk, and enjoined on us to live in imitation of their lives, are now remembered in rituals. The sagacity of Guru Gobind Singh in giving us Guru Granth Sahib as our perpetual Guru has almost always been subordinated to our external

obedience. We are proud and happy if :

- a. our children say *Panj Pauris* of *Japji Sahib* before eating something;
- b. our young children bow to *Guru Granth Sahib* before going to school, before opening their shops or before going for an examination;
- c. *Akhand Path Sahib* is ceremoniously completed at weddings or deaths, even if attendance is nil.
- d. we get *hukamnamas* from *Harimandar Sahib* through the post for an *Akhand Path* performed through our postal remittance;
- e. we see our young children keeping their hair and beard, even if they indulge in bribery, corruption, eve-teasing, drinking, political chicanery and other ills.

As for the cures, I would humbly suggest that we first establish the real causes of our degeneration in our hearts and, as parents, as highly placed rich individual Sikhs like advocates, teachers, doctors and businessmen, pledge ourselves to become examples of Sikhism in that —

- i. we should always remember that we are the *khaas roop* of *Guru Gobind Singh* as *Khalsa*
- ii. we should never be sharp or rude (*phika na boliye*)
- iii. we should be representative of the following teachings of the *Guru* :
 - a. *Dekh prayian changian mawan behina dheeyan jaane*
 - b. *Ninda bhali kise ki nahin*
 - c. *Karan na sune ka hoo ki ninda*
 - d. *Sabko meet ham aapan keena ham sabna ki sajan*
 - e. *Farida bure da bhala kar gusa man na handaye*
 - f. *Farida jo tein maran mukian tinan na maare ghum*
 - g. *Hown bal bal jayoun ramia karane*
 - h. *Man bechai satgur ke paas*
 - i. *Manas ki jaat sabhe eke pehchanbo*
 - j. *Deora masii soi pooja namaz ohi*
 - k. *Saas saas man naam samare*

In terms of our lives as Sikhs, we should ensure that our *kakkars* represent the sweetest and the best in human life.

My *kirpan* should indicate compassion and contentment and steely determination for the defence of the weak against injustice.

My *kara* should always be a warning against greed.

My *kesh* should always be blessed in dusting the feet of my Master.

My *kachchha* should indicate complete self-control.

My *kangha* should besides cleanliness of my hair, indicate the throwing out of negative thoughts from my head.

In other words, the examples before children should be of a Sikh who can represent *ham tum beech bhayo nahin koi; tumhee so kant naar ham soi* (Lord, no one should come between You and me, because You are my husband and I am your wife), and not *gali asi changian achari blurian* (we are good in talking but bad in practice). Like Bhagat Ravi Das, we should be able to say : *Eh janam tumare lekhe* (This life is dedicated to You, my Lord).

Indeed, when as ordinary Sikhs, we have established an environment of spiritualised living, all the positive steps and cures in terms of lectures, TV shows, *Gurmat* Camps, etc., would be effective.

My thrust, again and again, would be : Let us turn to the practical living in terms of the dictates of our masters in *Guru Granth Sahib*. The tragedy today is that not many of us read *Gurbani* and those who do, perform a ritual. Many of us are not even interested in understanding it, much less practising it. The real cause of our degeneration is, as I repeat *ad nauseam*, that we do not even know what our Guru wants and care even less whether we live upto his teachings or not.

When we worry about image, I think we should worry more — and certainly not less — about what a Sikh is like in his daily life, because with his total identity of hair and beard and *kakkars*, he is noticed in his bad actions, in his foolish, irreligious deals also. Only the other day, a Marathi teacher in a village school, invited me to talk to his students because he thought me worthy of this honour. After a few months of the function, where the eminent people of the village were present and were happy that someone from *Tapovan* had come there, some Sikh salesmen with their beards and turbans intact went there for selling some pots and pans. They booked orders and received money, and when they were leaving, someone asked them, "We hope you will not cheat us and send the goods in time". They proudly said, "We are Sikhs of *Guru Gobind Singh*, we will certainly send you everything." But they were cheated. The teacher, almost in tears and in a complaining mood, told

me this story. I too was sorry, but I had heard such things before. I merely howed out by saying, "There is degeneration among all the sections of the people, and Sikhs cannot be an exception."

But my chagrin is that much less attention is paid to raising the character of our people — we are all rotten, not only the youth, and this rottenness is visible more pronouncedly at the top, exceptions notwithstanding — because we are satisfied if we look *pooran Gursikhs*! When I was a child, I remember one old man very much annoyed to hear that his son had shaved off. I enquired from him why he had not been worried when he knew that his son used to trim his beard and accept bribes as a small functionary in the army's supply corps. That is it! We are worried when external symbols bring up the question of *loklaaj*, but when Guru's *hukam* is violated, we do not care.

Once again I repeat that we all have almost forgotten what the Guru's *hukam* is because the *patit* Commissioner, the *patit* Headmaster, the *patit* MLA, the *patit* Doctor, the *patit* Commander, the *patit* Police Officer and the *patit* businessman is respected everywhere in the same way as a *Gursikh* would be. The other day in Hyderabad, on a *Gurpurab* day, the Head *Granthi* of Harimandar Sahib had publicly honoured a *patit* richman with a *saropa* and words of grand tribute because he had donated *lakhs* of rupees for a *ragi jatha* to be called for *kirtan*. In a Sikh Public School, where some efforts were made for the *patit* children to grow hair and have turbans, complaints came from their parents, and some parents even at home cut their children's hair because they do not know the sanctity, value and power of obedience to Guru's *hukam*.

I suggest, in addition to my emphasis on the internal adherence to the Guru's commands in day to day life of elders, we should ensure that in Sikh Public Schools, admission of Sikh *patit* children should be affected only if they are prepared to keep their Sikh *Maryada*. As for the non-Sikh children, there would be no compulsion. The same should be implemented for the Sikh teachers. No Sikh *patit* teacher should be appointed. Nor should there be any relaxation in the case of other employees. Also, the hostel wardens in Sikh schools must be Sikhs who are devoted to the Guru.

I am now going to touch a point which might lead to raising of eyehrows. When I was a child, there was never a question of Hindu-Sikh animosity. And there were hundreds of Hindu families devoted to Sikh value system and Sikh culture. I am told that even Muslim Rababis used to sing at the Harimandar Sahib. Today, when I personally know that some really spiritual Hindus, who are not formal Sikhs, but who lead in teaching Sikhism

in Sikh Public Schools and many of them are *kirtinias* with a high spiritual life, question is raised about the validity of their doing so. I think, we will be narrowing our beliefs if we adhere to this understanding or misunderstanding. Ours is a wonderful universal system for raising manhood to Godhood. And it so happens that Hindus, who devoted themselves to our Gurus, but did not formally become Khalsa, are now being considered unfit to be the Guru's disciples! I do not know the intricacies, but I do think that we must make a distinction between the *patit* Sikhs, who merely shaved off even when they were born in Sikh families, and the Hindus who sold themselves to our Gurus in perfect devotion without growing hair and beard.

And finally, let me advocate another suggestion for bringing our youth back to Sikh purity and identity. Our quarrels at home among brothers, sisters, neighbours, uncles, etc., must end with the Guru's *hukm* in our heart, *sagal sang hamko ban aai* (we get on with everyone). If we display our dogged attachment to wealth, and that too, ill gotten, we cannot get rid of enmities; we cannot give up attacks on others; and we cannot be real Sikhs. We can have no hope that our children will be better than we are. For me, the goal will be reached when the youth of today also displays this *Sikhi* spirit, but for that, we elders must show it first.

"When Banda Singh Bahadur was defeated and there were hundreds of Sikhs being killed, a mother brought an order from the Mughal ruler that her young son in the Sikhs' ranks was not a Sikh and had been wrongly imprisoned and should be spared. When the young Sikh was separated and came to know the reason, he said, 'My mother is a liar. I am proud to be a Sikh and I must meet the same fate as my other brothers are meeting'."

And, when it dawns on the youth that the value, power and sanctity of the identity comes from the *hukm* of the Guru, I am sure that our youth will follow the elders' examples.

RELIGION AND MODERNITY — A SIKH PERSPECTIVE —

Dr N. Muthu Mohan*

1. INTRODUCTION

This is an article about the binariness found between Religion and Modernity. The first part of the paper elucidates that the binariness developed between traditional religions and the ideologies of modernity is an inevitable outcome of the metaphysical dichotomy cherished by the traditional philosophical and religious systems between transcendental and phenomenal territories of Being. Such a discussion is made in the article from the Sikh point of view, in the sense that the Sikh principle of concrete unity of *miri-piri* discards abstraction and one-sidedness found both in the traditional thought-systems and in the modernist ideologies. The later part of the article is dedicated to the evidence of some of the recent developments in theological and philosophical thinking attempting to resurrect the concept of unity of Reality, their *miri-piri* realms and consequently, confirming the privileged ideological position of Sikhism in the post-modern conditions. The paper, thus, stresses the necessity of conceptually clarifying the standpoints of Sikhism in and against traditional transcendentalism and positivist modernism. Now let us pass over to the argument.

2. THE BINARINESS OF RELIGION AND MODERNITY

Modernity is said to be the biggest ever challenge to Religions. The European continent, as the torchbearer of the fastest changes in science, technology, industry and social sciences, which go with the name of modernity, has first experienced the severest critique of its traditional religion, Christianity from the point of view of the new phenomenon and the flight of people away from religion. The first prominent wave of critique of religion was marked by two ideologies of the age of Renaissance (XV-XVI CC), namely, Humanism and Naturalism. "Philosophy during the Humanist period was man-centred, emphasising the place of man in the universe, while that during the Natural Science period was cosmos-centered. In both periods, philosophers turned their attention from theological studies of heaven, the life to come, God, the church, and supernatural things to the study of man and nature, the earthly needs of man, nature's relationship to man, and

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scientific methodology."¹ Thus, the Renaissance thought, as the beginning of the modern period, opened up the opposition between religion and modernist ideologies and made man — the individual as well as social — and nature the focal points of the latter. Deification of man including his body, stress on man's activities, his social nature, etc., became the basic aspects of the new world-view.

At the wake of the humanist and naturalist ideologies of Renaissance, it is necessary to ponder over the shift that occurred in the social consciousness of the period. For many centuries by then, Europe lived with the medieval Christian philosophy centered, and even overcentered, on the transcendental idea of God, Christian celibacy and asceticism, logocentrism, doctrinaire-dogmatism, etc., with least interest in earthly and existential problems of man and society. The German philosopher Hegel characterises the nature of traditional European religion in the following manner : "The object of Religion is not the earthly and worldly, but the infinite.... Absolute Being is the object of religious consciousness; and as such, is for it preeminently the 'other', a 'beyond'".² Guenter Lewy, the author of *Religion and Revolution*, maintains that traditionally religions encourage the meek acceptance of earthly suffering. "Religions have often been a force upholding the *status quo*, reinforcing the stability of society and enhancing political quietism.... They certainly discourage social and political protest. They encourage either meek acceptance of suffering or withdrawal from the turbulations of human society."³ The gross negligence of earthly life and its problems by religions was above all conditioned by the dichotomic pattern of thinking of religions. Bertrand Russel enumerates the dichotomy characteristic of the medieval Christian Thought. "The medieval world is characterised by various forms of dualism. There is the dualism of clergy and laity, the dualism of Latin and Teuton, the dualism of the Kingdom of God and Kingdoms of this world, the dualism of the spirit and flesh. All these are exemplified in the dualism of Pope and Emperor.... St. Augustine's *City of God* led churchmen, at the time of the fall of Western empire, to look on passively at secular disasters, while they exercised their great talents in Church discipline, theological controversy, and the spread of monasticism." B. Russel concedes that the dichotomic mentality makes "most people regard politics as 'worldly' and unworthy of any holy man".⁴

It is not mere dichotomising the Being, but introducing essentially an evaluative moment into the dichotomised parts and excluding the one from the other as meaningless, sinful, illusion or just an appearance. Thus, the dichotomies are not mere oppositions, but they are oppositional hierarchies, aimed at creating meaning to a part through evading meaning to the other

part. As a post-modernist writer puts it, "These oppositional concepts do not co-exist on equal grounds, however, rather, one side of each binary opposition has been privileged, while the other side has been devalued. Within these oppositions, a hierarchical 'order of subordination' has been established and truth has come to be valued over error, presence has come to be valued over absence and so on."⁵

The Renaissance thought seems to be a powerful reaction to the abovesaid mentality of hierarchised binariness and a justified protest against the otherworldliness and passivity of the medieval world. S. Radhakrishnan maintains that the Renaissance Humanism "is a legitimate protest against those forms of religion which separate the secular and sacred, divide time and eternity and break up the unity of soul and flesh".⁶ Hegel too considers the Renaissance shift of focus as the necessary result of the transcendentalism of medieval Christianity. He says, "...when the formal culture of the mind, found among the Scholastics, became transformed into the Universal, the result necessarily was that thought knew and found in itself; from this the antithesis between the finite understanding and ecclesiastical dogma or faith consequently arose."⁷ The alternative proposed by Renaissance at times looked as if the newly emerging thought forwarded a holistic approach in place of the dichotomised systems. Indeed, the Renaissance thinking was able to suggest a synthetic portrayal in certain areas of understanding, namely, the unity of micro- and macrocosms, body and soul, man and his environments, etc. However, the actual history subsequent to the Renaissance period fastly moved in a different direction. The pendulum swung towards the other extreme. The modern thought became more phenomenalist and interested in the finite. The modern age became to be self-satisfied with mechanical explanations of the world. The newly emerged sciences exceeded the limits of their subject-matter and claimed to offer a fresh philosophical perspective. The results of Scientism were cruel and inhuman. "According to Newton's Physics, the universe is a senseless, purposeless attraction and repulsion, collision and rebounding of so many mindless bodies. The world is an all encompassing machine operating according to the natural laws Newton had discovered and given precise formulation. Divine Will has no place in the explanation of the motions of this many-component machine, and, so far as physical science is concerned, the universe is nothing but this system of moving bodies. The universe is Godless deanimated, and purposeless. Man, for all his pretensions, becomes no more than one more body (or aggregation of bodies) obeying Newtonian laws of motion in the same senseless, purposeless fashion as all other bodies."⁸

Scientism in social life made the individual the fundamental unit

(atom or cell) or social living. Private property, Individual's freedom and rights, Individual's consciousness, etc., became the watchword of the period. This inevitably led to the binarism of Individual and Society, now hierarchised with exclusive privileges to the former. Individualisation fragmented social life as well as estranged man from the remaining moments of Being.

Scientific approach is not devoid of dichotomies too. In place of the traditional cosmological dichotomy of phenomenal and transcendental, it has produced dichotomies in the phenomenalist realm itself. Modern history of philosophy has witnessed in this regard the antagonism of empiricism and rationalism. Hegel indicates, "Knowledge from experience stands in opposition to knowledge arising from the speculative Notion, and the opposition is apprehended in so acute a manner that the knowledge proceeding from the Notion (Speculative Reason — MM) is ashamed of the knowledge from experience, just as this again takes up a position of antagonism to the knowledge through the Notion."⁹ Descartes revitalised the split of corporal body and thought. The cult of subject became so intense that everything including consciousness is objectified or made into the object of observation, study, exploitation and manipulation. This object of observation, study, exploitation and manipulation. This marked also the epistemological dichotomy of subject and object. Thus, the modern age has not overcome the binaries produced by the traditional religions of medieval period, on the other hand it has replaced them with new and aggravated them. The remark we do not make, however, to belittle some of the achievements of Modernity — the dignity of man, the sense of equality, priority to human action, etc.

3. THE SIKH PRINCIPLE OF CONCRETE UNITY OF MIRI-PIRI

As it is well-known, Sikhism did not encounter neither the cosmological dichotomy of traditional Christianity (Transcendental against Temporal) nor the phenomenalist dualism of Modernity (Subject versus object) in their European context. However, the dichotomy of Phenomenal and Transcendental was in vogue in India too in the form of the Vedantic dualism of Brahman and *Maya* (*Prakriti*). This is despite the claim of Advaita that it has represented a monistic viewpoint of one Brahman reality. Brahman, as the only reality, was achieved in Advaita through rigorous discrimination of the world, body and human action. The Advaita ideal was consequently named as *nirguna*, *nirprapancha*, *nirakara* and *niskarmya Siddhi*. Such a *Siddhi* was to be attained only through an equally rigorous world-negating practice, that is asceticism. The ethical and social implications of this negativist philosophy too are important for assessment. As such, the transcendent idea of Brahman is without any concern about the world due to the fact that the world and society are advised to be negated, and ethical living was replaced by a large

amount of Vedic rituals, which too were highly pragmatical. In difference to the Vedantic trend, the other side of the total reality was developed by the *Tantric* and *Samkhya* schools of thought in the form of *Prakriti Parinamavada* and *Hatha Yoga* practices, but this trend could pronounce its naturalistic beginnings only in a highly complicated way, in the form of symbols and mysticism. Despite the oneness present in these schools, the theory of world and human action developed by them were far away from a realistic portrayal and that too was succumbed to ritualism and magico-symbolic acts. The *Prakriti* School was not able to produce a viable ethical and social theory. Thus, the total philosophical situation in India before the advent of Sikhism was torn apart into two philosophical extremes, namely, that of Brahman and *Prakriti*, God and world, Transcendental and Temporal, etc.

The Sikh Gurus successfully overcame the limitations found in the traditional religio-philosophical systems of India. Sikhism consistently and consciously denies the dichotomic methodology of the above schools and relevantly synthesises the phenomenal and transcendental realms of reality. The Sikh principle of concrete unity of *miri-piri* is a holistic concept unknown to the traditional systems. Sikhism wages a crusade against the fragmented, bipolarised and hierarchised view of reality with all awareness. It proposes a unified, singular (*Ik*) and dynamic reality. "Himself is He immaterial, Himself material", says Guru Arjun (G.G.S., p. 1236).¹⁰ "The spiritual and the mundane world by Thee are propped. In all beings is pervasive the sole Lord", Guru Arjun repeats (G.G.S., p. 1148). The fifth Guru asserts beyond doubt that opposite words used to denote reality are just terms to portray the One Reality.

"Wherever I look,
His sole presence I behold;
Himself in each being immanent,
Himself the Sun, with rays outspread,
Himself the hidden reality
Himself the visible forms.
Attributed and unattributed
are two terms devised
But in unison one Reality formulate."

G.G.S., p. 387

A thorough understanding of the Sikh principle of unity of *miri-piri* involves double negation. On the one hand, it negates a raw *miri* philosophy, that is empiricism and phenomenalism. In modern context, it means the negation of consumeristic life and mere positivistic attitude to reality. On the

other hand, this means also the negation of a static and abstract *piri* position. This would condemn an overcentred transcendentalism and its practical form of ascetic way of living. Sikhism explores a middle, synthetic or third way discarding the old extremes. It is not a mechanical addition of *miri* and *piri* taken separately. The principle of *miri-piri* indicates the unity of the otherwise dichotomised pairs of subject and object, culture and nature, God and world, individual and society, matter and idea, etc.

Towards the 15th-16th centuries, India had not yet witnessed the binariness of religion and modernity as it was the case in Europe. However, Sikhism did evidence the *dharma* of modernity facing traditionalism in a specific way as the rupture between Hinduism and Islam. This point needs certain clarification. It has to be noted that Hinduism in this case stood for transcendentalism, world negation, ritualism and caste system, whereas Islam represented social activism with an overstress on political activism and intensification of Individualism. The modernity-potential of Islam is to be understood not in absolute terms, but in comparison to the conservative-potential of Hinduism and Hindu society. Hinduism and Islam, once they encountered each other, polarised themselves towards their abstract ends. Thus, Hindu system became more and more transcendental and ritualistic, whereas Islam became more and more political and individualistic. The Sufi mysticism too was not devoid of the latter, although in a hidden form.

The Sikh Gurus identified the formation of this binariness and its limitations. They fought the one-sided spiritualism and earthliness found in both Hinduism and Islam. Against the *Mayavada* of Hindu orthodoxy, the Sikh Gurus asserted the reality of the world. They declared that God is holy and His creation too is holy. Similarly, against the over-attachment of rulers with material wealth and power, the Gurus did not hesitate to state the illusoriness of earthly pleasures and falseness of political pride. While Sikhism is ready to accommodate the material world as an inalienable part of reality, it makes its criticism of it as the same is given absolute and ultimate status. Against the *niskarmyavada* of Hinduism, Sikhism poses human action as the only thing which is to be counted. But, against the prevalent violence unleashed in the contemporaneous society, Sikhism speaks about human deeds dyed with ethical concern.

Sikhism has enabled itself to grasply understand the problems of modernity. The theme of eradication of alienation is a widely discussed problem in the writings of the Gurus. Alienation as *haumain* is deeply discussed in Sikhism. Man's individualism leads him to lack of rootedness in total being. Man separates himself from God and from social living, and feels

non-related. Individualism has been identified as a malady both in its *mini* form (nonrelatedness in society) as well as in the *pini* form (philosophical aloneness of Brahman). Sikhism provides priority to voluntary ethical commitment. This is important in the modern context of impossibility of mere bureaucratic (rational) management of society and human affairs. Sikh ethics is communicative in the sense that it is based on understanding and commitment, and on the well-being of the whole. This has to be appreciated against the rational-instrumental ethics of modernist individualism, which inevitably objectifies the other. In Sikhism, one observes a keen environmental awareness. It celebrates the whole which includes the natural environment with which man is proposed to have familial relatedness. Sikhism in its critique of *haumain*, dehomocentrises the perception of reality. Anthropocentrism of modernist ideologies is overcome in Sikhism. Sikhism is pre-situated to modernity in discussing themes such as equality, social justice, human dignity, women's liberation, human rights, etc. Thus, in a very fundamental sense, Sikhism transcends traditionalism and modernity while absorbing the achievements of the latter. This is still more evidently confirmed when we look at some of the recent developments in theological thinking and compare them with the Sikh tenets.

4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THEOLOGY AND SIKHISM

We compare in this regard Sikhism with Liberation Theology, Process Theology and Zen Buddhism, which have left their impressive marks in XX c life. Above all, some mention needs to be made regarding Max Weber's studies on religion. Max Weber, a twentieth century German sociologist of religion, ventures into the history of religions and indicates that the history of world religions moves from magic, ritualism and world negation to increasing rationality and thisworldliness. Weber's major study is on the history of Christianity, and he shows that Protestant Christianity emerged out of the shells of traditional Catholicism with its priority to the moral making of man and critique of ascetic orthodoxy. Protestantism, according to Weber, contains in itself a type of economic ethics, which advocates a thisworldly asceticism, an ascetic spirit invested in earthly activities. He sees in Protestant ethics an entrepreneur spirit which forms the essential feature of modernity. Max Weber has also left certain remarks on Indian religions, particularly on Hinduism and Buddhism. Following Albert Szeitzer, Weber criticises them for being otherworldly and ritualistic. Otherworldliness always breeds a passive attitude to earthly problems and makes impossible and unnecessary any transformation of given social set-up. Otherworldliness also discourages human resources to be mobilized for productive activities.

Weber did not visit India and we do not find any reference in Weberian writings to Sikhism. However, Weber's studies throw some light on some of the original contributions of Sikhism. Certain core features identified by Weber as the basis of modernity are found in Sikhism. Weberian approach leads to conclude that the history of religions moves towards the principle of *miri-piri*.

This has happened indeed in the case of Liberation Theology, a recent development in Catholic Christianity itself. Liberation Theology as a distinct trend within Catholic Christianity emerged in post-war years in Latin America where the Christian priests took up arms against fascist dictatorships of their respective countries. Liberation Theology is an ideology of the transcendent descending on earth. It claims that Christianity can no more attend only to theological problems and scholastic discussions, and that it should come forward to respond to the existential problems of man and humanity. Theologians of Liberation see Jesus as a revolutionary who courageously fought the Jewish orthodoxy and oppressive rulers of his time. This recent trend of identifying inspiration for social change in religion is well-found in the case of Sikh history. The struggle for social justice is an immanent feature of Sikhism all through its theory and history. The Sikh philosophical principle of *miri-piri* is concretised in Sikh theology of liberation.¹¹ The Sikh as well as Christian theology of liberation throws away the millenarian expectations and last judgement, and suggests to establish the Kingdom of God — the just order — here and now.

Process Theology, a recent trend now in Protestant Christianity too contains very interesting moments which can be compared to the achievements of Sikhism a few centuries earlier. Process Theology, represented by A.N. Whitehead, fundamentally criticises the transcendental and purely metaphysical idea of God found in traditional religions including Christianity. A.N. Whitehead coins certain new terms in understanding the idea of God and world, such as "relatedness" or "relationality" of Being. According to Whitehead, God is always related with the world and, together with the creation and changes occurring in world, the idea of God too is to be understood as in a Dynamic Process. Whitehead asserts that God has a primordial nature as well as a consequent nature. God is temporal and non-temporal at the same time. God is immanent in world and the world is immanent in God. Time and history are the ways God actualises Himself in real terms.¹²

There are certainly many differing moments between Process Theology and Sikhism if we compare them in their totality. However, one cannot miss the similarities available between them. About 500 years ago, Guru

Nanak described God as unity of transcendence and immanence, and the reality as the relatedness of God and world. The Guru also declared that God is a Dynamic Being eternally creating and recreating. The reality of the changing world was made by the Sikh Gurus one of the cardinal principles of Sikhism.

Finally, let us have a look at some of the ideals of Zen Buddhism, now an Eastern school of thought, often attributed as the ideological source of Japanese mind pattern, entrepreneur spirit and discipline. Zen Thought is a branch of Mahayana Buddhism, which was famous for its formulation of 'middle path', excluding the extremes of asceticism and consumeristic materialism. That Mahayana did not follow the middle path in its correctness is a problem of history. However, Zen Thought inherits and revitalises this age-old principle of Buddhism. It formulates the middle path as the unity of *Nirvana* and *Samsara*. This description is very much in line with the Sikh principle of *miri-piri*. Zen identifies the unity of *Nirvana* and *Samsara* as a third position leaving behind *Samsara* and *Nirvana* in their separateness. Raw *Samsara* is characterised in Zen as ego-bound and suffering and *Nirvana* reached after negating *Samsara* as unproductive and nihilistic. According to Zen, *Nirvana* continues to have the residue of egoism — the individualistic attachment to liberation. Therefore, it proposes a third position, a return to the world enlightened. Zen suggests to achieve enlightenment in a spontaneous manner. The term used in Zen to indicate the latter is *Sahaj*, which is common to Sikhism and Zen. This means an enlightened mind even within the thickness of everyday life. Zen asserts that enlightenment is possible even while a man attends his war duty. Thus, Zen advocates wisdom associated with everyday earthly activities. This Zen ideal takes it closer to the Sikh concept of *miri-piri* and *sant-sipahi*.

5. CONCLUSION: IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST APOSTASY

In the above discussion, we have tried to establish the ideologically privileged position of Sikhism in comparison to traditional religious systems and to the ideologies of modern industrial society. Scholars studying Sikhism have the duty to bring out the potentialities of Sikhism in various socio-cultural situations and the implications of its principles to modern and post-modern societies.

This becomes imperative in the context of spreading apostasy among the Sikh youth. No doubt, there are various other — social, political and cultural — reasons for the phenomenon of apostasy. However, ideological non-commitment is one of the basic causes for the said problem. Ideological non-commitment among youth is often conditioned by inadequate

intellectual activity of the respective culture and the shyness of the intellectuals to highlight the achievements and potentialities of the given culture. Sikhism indeed has rich achievements and plenitude of potentialities to its credit. The Sikh organisations and institutions, above all the Sikh community, must come forward to mobilize its intellectuals, support their activities of theoretical studies in order to make them wage a consistent and well-founded struggle explicating and elucidating the appurtenances of Sikh philosophy. Unity of the Sikh community and Sikh intelligentsia is a prerogative to achieve this end.

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DISTORTION OF SIKH HISTORY IN SCHOOL-BOOKS AND ITS LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

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Education in the secondary schools is of utmost importance, and it has been so recognised by educationists and psychologists throughout the world. The young students are at the threshold of first flush of youth at that stage of life and are amenable to the influence of educational material used in the school classrooms for the purpose of moulding their character and personality. This is the time when attitude to life is formed and broad foundations for future life are firmly laid down. The minds being impressionable, the impressions formed about the world around and historical personalities are so strong that many a time it becomes difficult to erase such impressions from the minds in the later stages of life. It is because of such a sensitive situation that a great care is taken to design and plan the subject material of those subjects which would have great potential for influencing the mind of the students. One such subject having serious potential in influencing the students is the subject of History. This subject from time immemorial has played a major role in moulding the personality and character of young students. History arouses enthusiasm in them, and they are bound to imaginatively identify themselves with historical personalities in their aims and aspirations. When the whole panorama of historical events and personalities is unfolded before the minds of the students, they automatically form their opinion about such historical personalities. Love or hatred is the natural outcome of such a process. That is why, the future of a race or a nation is made or marred in the school classrooms. This has happened many a time in the history of the world.

Guru Gobind Singh was conscious of this character-moulding influence of history. It is a known fact that when he lay grievously wounded at Nanded (Hazoor Sahib) at the fag end of his worldly journey, one important advice he gave to his followers was to read "the history of your Gurus from the time of Guru Nanak". It is because of the supreme value of history in the nation-building that Guru Gobind Singh himself recorded history. The Guru knew that in order to understand the present, proper knowledge of the past

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is necessary, as the present of everything has its roots in the past. It is important for the Sikhs to remain conscious of their past, as Sikhism is a historically-oriented religion, and mythology has no place in it. Ignorance of their glorious history is dangerous for the Sikhs, and it is bound to blind the race. It is also a historical fact that the races or nations, which became oblivious of their history, were ruined, lost the life-force of historical process and got stuck in the bye-lanes of time. History is also a witness to the fact that the Sikhs survived the most difficult period of their existence because of the moral and spiritual sustenance provided to them by the 'Guru-period' of their history. The history of Apostle-Martyr-Hero-Guru kept aglow the historical path for them, and they successfully continued the march on the historical canvas of history. But, now the time has changed. The future of a nation or a race is not so often made or marred on the battlefield, but on the pages of school history books got written by modern governments for mass consumption. This is what is happening to the Sikh history nowadays.

Do the Sikhs know what kind of their history, in the name of "developing an attitude of studying the past objectively and promoting an understanding of India's cultural heritage", is being taught in the schools of India and abroad ?

Are the Sikhs also aware of the disastrous consequences of distortion of their history for the future of Sikhism and the Sikhs ?

My year long experience of contesting the case regarding objectionable remarks about Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs tells me that most of the Sikhs are not aware of such things, and the Sikh leadership remains indifferent when such facts are brought to their notice.

Before making any comment on the serious implications of distortions of Sikh history in school-books, some paragraphs as set in the books of history are reproduced in order to avoid any kind of misunderstanding. First example of historical distortion is from the book, *Medieval India — History Text-book for Class XI*, written by Sh. Satish Chandra for NCERT and prescribed by the CBSE. The relevant paragraph reads as under :

Medieval India — A History Text-book for Class XI, p. 237.

THE SIKHS: The Sikhs were the last to come into military conflict with Aurangzeb. As we have seen, there was conflict with the Sikh Gurus during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. But the reasons for the conflict were political and personal rather than religious. The Gurus had started living in style with an armed following, and assumed the title of *scha padshah* (the true sovereign). However, there was no conflict

between the Guru and Aurangzeb till 1675, when Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested with five of his followers, brought to Delhi and executed. The causes of this are not clear. According to some Persian accounts, the Guru had joined hands with a *Pathan*, Hafiz Adam, and created disturbances in the Punjab. According to Sikh tradition, the execution was due to intrigues against the Guru by some members of his family, who disputed his succession and who had been joined by others. But we are also told that Aurangzeb was annoyed because the Guru had converted a few Muslims to Sikhism and raised a protest against religious persecution in Kashmir by the local Governor. It is difficult to sift the truth of these allegations. Sikhism had gradually spread to many Jat peasants and low caste artisans, who were attracted by its simple, egalitarian approach. The economic discontent of these sections may have been reflected by the Guru. In Kashmir, the previous Governor, Safi Khan, is famous as a builder of bridges. He was a humane and broad-minded person who had appointed a Hindu to advise him in administrative matters. Stories of mass persecution by the new Governor appear to be exaggerated because Kashmir had been predominantly Muslim since the fifteenth century."

The reading of the paragraph shows that the whole complexion and tenor is anti-Sikh history and Sikhism, whereby the whole spiritual heritage of earlier Sikh Gurus and Sikh history stand repudiated and extremely distorted. All the Sikh Gurus were spiritual and religious persons, and they spent their whole life in preaching the message of love and peace. Those were the times of Muslim oppression, and other religions of India were highly discredited. The Sikh Gurus took up the struggle against the Mughal Emperors for the religious values and freedom of conscience and for the establishment of *Dharma*. The whole conflict was in fact on spiritual and religious level, and not for any political or personal interest, as has been asserted by Sh. Satish Chandra. The Sikh Gurus had no love for the 'temporal domain', and they never claimed and fought for any territory. Their struggle was for righteousness and justice. It was only the unprovoked execution of Guru Arjun Dev, which compelled his son, the Sixth Guru, to arm his followers for the defence of their person and religion. There was no pomp and glory for its own sake. That was the only course left open for honourable and dignified living. But, Sh. Satish Chandra, a well-known historian, has chosen to misstate the facts without proper analysis of historicism of Sikh history of that period, and that too in a school history book. This serious misstatement about the personality of the Sikh Gurus and the nature of their struggle with the Mughal Emperors is bound to create wrong impression on

the mind of the students. In this paragraph, the most unfortunate statement is about Guru Tegh Bahadur's personality and execution. The writer makes Guru Tegh Bahadur a hooligan and marauder alongwith one *Pathan* Hafiz Adam, on the basis of some Persian sources of dubious nature; as extensive research by Dr Ganda Singh and other historians has positively proved that no person of Hafiz Adam's name was contemporary of Guru Tegh Bahadur. One person of that name was expelled from Mughal Empire by Shah Jahan in 1642. He left for Mecca-Madina and died there in 1643, almost 22-years before Guru Tegh Bahadur came to *Guru Gadi* in 1664. So, no question of Guru Tegh Bahadur's joining hands with a *Pathan* Hafiz Adam arises at all. Why this historical misstatement to put aspersions on Guru Tegh Bahadur's personality? It would have been better, if the writer had studied Guru Tegh Bahadur's *bani* as enshrined in *Guru Granth Sahib* before making such type of wrong statement in a school history book. The serious question — both historical and psychological arises: Can a person of Guru Tegh Bahadur's spiritual stature and eminence be a marauder and hooligan? The answer is "No" — as no person of criminal tendencies can write poetry of that high spiritual order, as has been written by Guru Tegh Bahadur. Moreover, such a misstatement also does not fit in the biographical sketch of Guru Tegh Bahadur — the person who meditated for 21 years in seclusion, did not have any interest in pomp and show, preached the message of love and co-existence throughout India, and lastly, sacrificed his life for the defence of other people's religion and freedom of conscience. The effectiveness of this historical event of singular nature in the history of the world has been accepted till today by Muslims in India and abroad. I witnessed this fact last year in Kenya. A Muslim boy had married a Sikh girl of tender age, and there was a dispute between the two communities. The Muslim, in order to humiliate the Sikhs, had published various stories in the newspapers. They published also a pamphlet, 786-Khilafa, to further humiliate the Sikhs; a few lines from which read like this:

"...We join together to applaud you and the great mother who has given birth to one who has brought a Sikh girl into our faith. Through her we can see a strike being made against a religion, which has been a thorn in the side of Islam for 500 years. We would have converted the whole of India and not only Punjabis to Islam if these Kafir Sikhs had not been born. The Khilafa would have spread all over Asia by now....."

It is very unfortunate that what has been accepted by the Muslims as a great historical fact in changing the history of India, is being denied by those very people for whose sake Guru Tegh Bahadur suffered martyrdom.

Regarding the reasons of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution, the approach of the writer is most unfortunate and enigmatic. He has conveniently and deliberately ignored to mention the real reason of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution, i.e., because of his defence of Hinduism at the request of Kashmiri Brahmins; for which he is popularly known throughout India and abroad as *Hind Dee Chadar*. Indirectly, the writer has refuted the reason, which has been so eloquently mentioned by Guru Gobind Singh in his famous composition, *Bachittar Natak*. This fact also creates serious implications for Sikhism and the Sikhs.

- Did Guru Gobind Singh mention the wrong reason for Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution ?
- Are all the traditions wrong, which are deeply embedded in the group memory of the Sikhs and the Kashmiri Brahmins, about Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom ?
- What more positive, convincing and contemporary evidence the writer had to challenge the statement about Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom made by Guru Gobind Singh in his famous composition, *Bachittar Natak* ? Is it not a fact that most of the Muslim historians of that period were biased against the Sikhs ?
- The question then arises, why has Sh. Satish Chandra chosen to feed the young students with wrong and controversial historical material ?
- When the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs were fighting with the tyrannical Mughal Empire, the then Muslim writers were naturally inclined to write against the people of the new creed, i.e., Sikhism.
- Why have such wrong historical facts been made a part of the syllabus of a school history book ?
- The veracity of the narrative is highly doubtful and bound to create wrong impression on the mind of the students. What is the real motive of teaching such a distorted history of the Sikhs ? The Sikhs need to find a clear and straight answer to safeguard the future of Sikhism and the Sikhs.

The other important example of distortion of Sikh history is from the book : *Modern India — A History Textbook for class XII*. It is the same book regarding which a case was contested in Punjab and Haryana High Court by a young student Aman Preet Singh, and he ultimately won the same. The full text of the judgement was published in the July issue of the *Spokesman* and July-September 1996 issue of *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*. The reading of

the judgement makes the whole issue very clear. But, for proper analysis, the paragraph introducing the Sikhs to the young students is reproduced, which reads like this :

Modern India — A History Textbook for Class XII, pp. 18 and 19.

THE SIKHS : Founded at the end of the 15th century by Guru Nanak, the Sikh religion spread among the Jat peasantry and other lower castes of the Punjab. The transformation of the Sikhs into a militant, fighting community was begun by Guru Hargobind (1606-45). It was, however, under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, that they became a political and military force. From 1699 onwards, Guru Gobind Singh waged constant war against the armies of Aurangzeb and the hill *rajas*. After Aurangzeb's death, Guru Gobind Singh joined Bahadur Shah's camp as a noble of the rank of 5,000 Jat and 5,000 *sawar*, and accompanied him to the Deccan where he was treacherously murdered by one of his *Pathan* employees. After Guru Gobind Singh's death, the institution of Guruship came to an end and the leadership of the Sikhs passed to his trusted disciple Banda Singh, who is more widely known as Banda Bahadur....."

The reading of the para also shows that it has disastrous consequences for Sikhism and the Sikhs. It would be no exaggeration if it is said that this single misstatement about Guru Gobind Singh's personality puts the whole history of Sikhism upside-down. The Sikhs have to think about this :

- What remains of Sikhism, if it is taught as an established fact in the schools of India and abroad that Guru Gobind Singh chose to become an instrument of oppression in the hands of a Mughal Emperor after such an intensive lifelong struggle of great sacrifices ?
- Would not the people laugh at Guru Gobind Singh and his followers ?
- Is this conduct not attributed to Guru Gobind Singh in complete negation of Guru Nanak and other eight Sikh Gurus' spiritual heritage ?

This misstatement does not appeal to the conscience of any thinking person. This was the reaction of the Judges, when the Writ Petition was filed challenging the veracity of the above said para. The Hon'ble Court on the first day of hearing, immediately stayed the teaching of the impugned paragraph throughout the jurisdiction of the court, and later on the Judges suggested to the counsel of the Government of India and NCERT to delete

those objectionable remarks about Guru Gobind Singh of their own and make the statement accordingly. But the counsel remained adamant and said that the statement was true and the same could not be changed to please the Sikhs. They argued the case with unusual vehemence, which continued for full two days. They repeatedly read from their written statements, the core of which reads like this :

"Whether Guru Gobind Singh became or did not become a noble of Emperor Bahadur Shah is a matter of historical debate to be resolved by historians ? It has absolutely no bearing on either the view being derogatory to Sikhs or their religion or to hurting their sentiments. Therefore, it is preposterous to suggest that a reference to Guru Gobind Singh becoming a noble of 5,000 Jat and 5,000 *sawar* is derogatory to Sikhs and their religion".

The other Respondent, CBSE, took the stand that facts mentioned in the para are "true and the historical facts, if true, cannot be changed or modified to suit the sensibilities and sentimentalities of a section of society. The book in question has been prepared with the assistance of renowned historians and the veracity of such historical facts, if disputed, should not be adjudicated in a writ petition". But ultimately the Hon'ble Court did not agree with their arguments and decided the case in favour of the petitioner, rather in favour of the Sikhs and Sikhism, upholding the honour and dignity of a great Sikh Guru, whose struggle and sacrifices are singular in the history of the world. No doubt, the case has been won, but it has a lesson for the Sikhs, as they have to go a long way in defending the honour of their Gurus and the Sikhs throughout India. The other question before the Sikh masses from the history of the present case is : What is the real function of Sikh religious bodies founded after the name of our Great Guru ? What for are the huge funds collected by such bodies and how should those be spent ? What are the effective ways and means to safeguard the future of Sikhism and Sikhs, keeping in view their role in the present case ?

The Sikh history, it is to be understood by the Sikhs, has special importance in Sikhism, as it is not a chronicle of political and social events, but essentially the story of growth and development of Sikhism. The whole pattern, rhythm and trend of Sikh history has been determined by the fundamentals of Sikh religion; in fact, both are interwoven in such a manner that it is difficult to separate the two. It is also a known fact that the nucleus of Sikh history is the Guru-period, which also forms the great 'historical mind' of Sikh history. The real consciousness started filtering into the consciousness of Sikhs from that period. It is because of this importance of the period that

again and again the efforts have been made to distort the Sikh history of that period with the object that if the fountain-head is polluted, then the stream is bound to be muddled and the flow of historical consciousness is affected. Sikhs have to take special care of the Guru-period of Sikh history in order to preserve Sikhism in its pristine glory. Sikhism has suffered most seriously in its image defacement during the last few decades and it is the moral duty of the present-day Sikh generation to make every effort to restore the earlier image and hand it over to the next generation in the same glory as they received it from the earlier generation.

The problem of apostasy among the present-day generation of Sikh youth can also be attributed to the ignorance of Sikh history and its present-day distortions in government sponsored books and other media. The ideals and heroes of Sikh history have been attacked at, and by making distortions in Sikh history, efforts have been made to put them down from the high pedestal on which they stand in history, so that their examples may not be able to supply the moral tonic to the subsequent Sikh generations. In most of the cases, the young students in the schools are unable to critically analyse the facts mentioned in the history books and they believe whatever is written in the prescribed books. The distorted Sikh history fails to arouse enthusiasm in the minds of the Sikh youth, and disillusionment takes place, which ultimately finds expression in apostasy and other vices prevalent in today's society.

The distinct identity of the Sikhs and their Five-Ks are generally considered difficult to keep in many alien environments of the world and also in the face of insidious peer pressure of this fashionable age. The Sikhs cannot conceal their identity and become a part of the herd, which fact in many situations of life creates conflict of identity and crisis of various kinds, not easy to bear for everyone. It is only the idealism of Sikh history and pride in its apostles, martyrs and heroes, which can keep the Sikh youth of today in its distinct form and appearance with pride. It has to be sunk into their consciousness by planned methods that the Sikh history is the history of the most remarkable representatives of a small elite of brave and fearless heroes, who knew how to sacrifice their lives for the sake of honour and dignity; and the Sikh youth of today has to carry on those traditions of their glorious history. The Sikh youth has also to be constantly reminded of the historical path of Sikhism, which was delineated by Guru Nanak when he said :

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ,
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ।

ਇਤ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ,
ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ।

Slok, 1412

If you wish to play the game of love, then enter my path,
with such a determination, for which you are ready to die.

Whosoever sets his foot on this way,
should always be ready to sacrifice his life for its principles,
without any hesitation.

†This is the only way of developing in-built, ever-lasting mechanism among the Sikhs to keep Sikhism in its distinct, cultural-historical form and identity.

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR OF SIKH TROOPS — BRITISH PERIOD —

Brig. Gurdip Singh (Retd.)*

It is commonly believed that the British fostered the Sikh Religion in the Army. Some writers go to the extent of mentioning that a separate Sikh identity was so engineered by the British that it suited the designs of imperialistic policy. Richard Fox, in a reference to Sikhs in the Indian Army, states that they were "transmuted into Singhs by the British". This myth was also popularised by scholars like N.G. Barrier and others. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The reality was quite different as the facts show. The British were, however, very circumspect in their dealings with Sikhs in general and Sikh troops in particular.

The British fully realised, and that too at a very early stage of their contact with the Sikhs, that it is not possible to dominate the Khalsa imbued with the sovereign spirit. Therefore, they must not treat the Sikh people with the same ideational congruity as the people of the rest of India. In pursuance of this stratagem, the British established what came to be known as "Punjab School of Administration". The exalted stature of the Khalsa, to which the British needed to adapt, was evinced by the pulsating spirit of the *Misl* crusades and conquering Khalsa *Fauj* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The British had keenly observed the high degree of cultivated consciousness and democratically principled but commanding authority of the Khalsa *Fauj*, exercised through the *sarpanches*, during the disturbed phase of post-Ranjit Singh controversies.

The first hand British impressions of their encounters with the Sikhs are accurately conveyed through some of the remarks of well-known authors. After the Battle of Chelianwala in January 1849, the stunned British experience is recorded thus, "such a mass of men, fierce and untamed in their dying struggle, who fought like lions and ran right on the bayonets and struck on their assailants when they were transfixed". H.G. Rawlinson, briefly referring to the comparative fighting qualities of soldiers, states "A Sikh soldier had really to be killed twice". J.D. Cunningham, praising the sterling qualities of the men that comprised the Army of the Khalsa, describes their conduct after their defeat in 1846 in the following words, "Their manly deportment

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added lustre to that valour which the victors had dearly felt and generously extolled", Cunningham further adds that the Sikhs attributed the defeat to chance of war and displayed confidence for the future based on the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh.

As far as the religion was concerned, the British should have assimilated its significance quite adequately. The Christian world had fought wars in the name of religion. The Papal diktats had moved armies across frontiers in the service of the Church. But it seems they had faltered in comprehending the sensibilities of the native Hindu and Muslim troops. They had ignored strict religious taboos which generated widespread discontent, and resulted in the 1857 revolt. The policy was then reviewed by the British. What followed was the Royal Proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858. It granted "Religious Neutrality" to all religious traditions prevalent in India. In pursuance of this policy, the British maintained Army units on communal lines. The units adopted their communal war cries. They also permitted every community, and not the Sikhs alone, to observe their distinct religious discipline. Thus the British gave due regard to religious ethos of soldiers, so much so that in Hindu units, the high class Brahmins cooked their food separately.

Let us look at the execution of this policy of religious neutrality specifically from the Sikh point of view. An extract from the report titled "Development in Sikh Politics (1900-1911)", compiled by D. Petric, who was Assistant Director, Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, amply illustrates the slant : "The British adopted a very strict and rigid policy detrimental to the growth of Sikhism. After annexation, the Golden Temple Amritsar, alongwith six other Gurdwaras and the Gurdwara at Taran Taran were practically controlled by the British authorities through a Manager of these Gurdwaras appointed by the British Government. The Waqf Act of 1861 gave the control and management of the holy places of the Hindus and Muslims to the communities concerned, but in the case of Sikh Gurdwaras, the Act was not applied on political grounds. The properties of Sikh places of worship were transferred and given over to the *Udasi Mahants* and others, throughout the Punjab". This theme is further elaborated by Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon in an article titled, *The Sikhs and the British* : "The British knew full well that the centres of Sikh strength and inspiration were their scripture, ideology and Gurdwaras. The Sikhs who were traditionally known to draw their religious vigour, vitality and inspiration from their ideology and holy places, some of which were associated with the martyrdoms and struggles of the Gurus against the rulers, were segregated from their glorious tradition and corrupted ideologically". Furthermore, the wearing of *kirpan* was restricted by Arms Act of 1876. It was only after an agitation that exemption

was obtained after World War I. The British also had resisted Gurdwara Reforms and suppressed other aspirations.

Acting on other fronts, the British abolished all military grants to Sikh *Jagirdars*. It was only the pliable *Sardars* who were patronised. The Sikh soldiers of the Khalsa *Fauj* were disbanded, and only about a tenth of the establishment were taken into British service, and these too were dispersed to cantonments far away from Punjab.

The British had correctly perceived the residual urge of Sikh nationality and military ambition. This had also made them aware of the potential of the adversary. Consequently, the British preserved a delicate balance between neutralising and not provoking. At macro level they executed their imperiatic designs of curbing the ideological and political wing of the Sikhs, and at micro level, in Army units, to ensure two way loyalty of troops. They pandered to Sikh religious sentiments, and many of them who remained in close contact with their troops, genuinely came to admire and respect the spirit of Sikhism. A reported incident related to respect for religious grandeur of Sikh troops is very illustrative. A British officer of the mixed class Regiment which had Sikh, Hindu and Muslim troops was asked by a visiting friend why he showed so much respect to the Sikh religious book mentioning it as Guru Granth Sahib, whereas in other cases, he just said Gita or Koran. The officer decided to demonstrate his answer and sent a messenger instructing that each religious book be brought. The first one to come was the Mullah carrying a Koran in his hand. The next to come was the *Pandit*, who had applied *tilak* on his forehead and carried the Gita under his armpit. The last to arrive were the five Sikhs chanting *Waheguru* and carrying with full ceremonial dignity their Guru Granth Sahib. The friend got his answer. This incident loudly declares that it was primarily the strengths of the followers of the Sikh faith that forced reciprocatory reverence for their way of life. The religion for the Sikh soldier was not an abstract form, it was a way of life. The unique features, observances and attitude of "*Charhdi Kala*" in peace and war, and in comparative differential association with other religions, compelled respect.

The professional import of Sikh troops could not escape the British, more so when they assimilated their religious doctrines and matched some of these against the attributes of martial code. The attributes of martial code, studied by anthropologists from the depths of tribal instincts and researched by social scientists, as also defined by military leaders, are composed of twin strands of Valiant and Virtuous. Valiant is further characterised by the qualities of Fortitude and Courage being followed by Prudence, Temperance

and Justice. Whereas Virtuous traits are derived from Moral Rectitude, and demand Loyalty, Duty and Service. As such, the martial code simply rests on honour, which is not obtained unless extreme situation is faced with Resoluteness. A soldier steeped in martial code lives and dies for a general cause identified with common good. Personal ambition or ego is frowned upon as fall from grace. It is quite evident that all these soldierly animations are not at all foreign to Sikhism or the living faith of Sikhs. Consequently, the extensive British reliance on Sikh troops and displaying pride in their religion,

! Apart from the battles fought against the British, the record of valour of Sikh Regiment continued to add stature to the lofty status in which the British held this Regiment. An outstanding action of unsurpassed bravery against stupendous odds by Sikh soldiers will reinforce this aspect. I refer to the battle of Saragarhi fought in North West Frontier Province by a detachment of 21 soldiers of 4 Sikh Battalion in 1897. It is rated as one of the world's most courageous actions in the annals of military history. The signalling post of Saragarhi between two fortifications of the Battalion was held by Hav Ishar Singh and his comrades. It was attacked by an overwhelming enemy force in thousands and no reinforcements could materialise. This band of brave Sikhs fought till the last man, inflicting extremely heavy casualties till the final signal was sent by the lone surviving signaller that every other member of the team had died in fighting and now he himself is going to kill some of the enemy before sacrificing his life, as such no more signal could be sent. All the 21 soldiers of this detachment were decorated with IDSM equivalent to Victoria Cross or Param Vir Chakra. In a rare magnanimous tribute, the memorial to this act of supreme sacrifice still stands at Saragarhi. Successive generations of Hav Ishar Singh have continued to proudly serve in 4 Sikh Battalion. A memorial to commemorate the Saragarhi Epoch is also maintained at Ferozepur — the home of 4 Sikh Battalion and it is planned to celebrate the 100th Anniversary at Ferozepur in 1997.

It would be appropriate to mention here some of the conventions followed in the Sikh Regiment. The most significant one was customary participation of all non-Sikh officers in all religious ceremonies of the unit, and the British officers specifically did so quite willingly and diligently. The ceremonial dress for parades mandated non-Sikh officers to wear turbans. The new recruits on completion of their training were first administered *Amrit* and only then administered oath of allegiance. The Regimental standing orders forbade any practices against the tenets of Sikhism. There were standard punishments specified for delinquency. Any officer, who disrespected any of the Sikh religious observances, was disgracefully moved out of the Regiment. Guru Granth Sahib had the pride of place in the Regiment,

irrespective of the circumstances of the unit. It was part of the unit in peace and war. In keeping with this tradition, the Sikh units during the two World Wars carried and brought back from overseas operations their Guru Granth Sahib with due sanctity. A religious teacher was appointed in each battalion. They were carefully selected with great attention to their religious piety. It is a tribute to the religious fervour of the Sikh troops that some very eminent and pious Sikh *sants* owe their background to Army service. No account of religious traditions of the Sikh troops can be complete without recalling their names. Prominent ones are Baba Bir Singh of Naurangabad, Baba Ram Singh, Baba Karam Singh of Hoti Mardan, Baba Nand Singh, Baba Jawala Singh of Harkhowal, Baba Wasakha Singh and Baba Attar Singh of Mastuana.

It would not be out of place to mention that the Sikh troops in service of State forces like Patiala were equally devout Sikhs and maintained highest traditions of Sikhism. When the State forces were merged with the Indian Army, the Sikh units first marched past their unit Gurdwara seeking blessing, and only after that received the National Colours.

As an overview, deduced from the observations mentioned herein, we can categorically and unambiguously conclude the following :

1. That the British did not subsidise towards Sikh religious values or identity. Rather than any special favourable dispensation, the British assiduously implemented a policy of containment of Sikhs. This was discriminatory and contrary to proclamation of religious neutrality – which was observed in the case of Hindus and Muslims.
2. That comprehending the religious precepts and practices of the Sikhs, as also the martial code, the British could not but grant unprecedented high consideration to Sikh troops.
3. That the strengths of Sikh way of life, and more specifically the religious fervour of Sikh troops, compelled the British not only to avoid interference but to accord respect to their religious tenets.
4. That the proven record of supreme bravery of Sikh troops forced the British to pander to the ethos of Sikh troops.

Having considered the pattern of British-Sikh troops relationship and coming closer to our times, we notice some glaring contrasts. Although the Sikh soldiers were the same, they had the same valour and they had the same virtues, yet gradually and inexorably their treatment underwent a change due to political overtones. After independence or change of Government at Delhi, there have been four attempts to disturb the class based composition

of the fighting units. The issue was first examined by an Army Committee in 1949. Then in 1965, Mr. Jagiwan Ram, as Defence Minister, decided to correlate the recruitment into the Army in proportion to "Recruitable Male Population" of a state. In 1975, the thread was picked up once again by another Committee. But it was after "Operation Blue Star" that the change in class composition was seriously considered. An approach paper on the subject opined that in one class units, regional and sectarian aspirations tend to overwhelm national perspective. It is doubtful if the intent has been finally given up. In the meanwhile, the harshest blow to Sikhs has been the curtailment of recruitment into the Army. Punjab stood to lose 12.16% share of recruitment resulting in permanent denial of over one *lakh* twenty thousand job opportunities. Having realised the value of Sikh soldiers, the British had taken adequate care not to alienate them. It is mentioned that one of the reasons ascribed to the repeal of Colonisation Bill by the Viceroy in 1909, which was strongly resented by the Sikh peasantry, was the unrest amongst Sikh soldiers, whose relatives at home were adversely affected by the Bill. Later too, during the service of British time officers like Gen. Thorat, this concern prevailed to some extent. Gen. Thorat had come over to the Sikh Regimental Centre in 1961 and enquired from the Commandant regarding likely reaction of Sikh soldiers to the declared "fast unto death" by Master Tara Singh. How contrasting, how totally callous, was the attitude leading upto "Operation Blue Star". And the final blow was the publication of *Bat Cheet*, meant for all units of the Army, stating that all *Amritdhari* Sikhs are militants and as such subject to surveillance.

Besides the repelling external reasons, have there been internal reasons too for the decline in Sikh way of life? Earlier on the recruits came soaked with religious doctrines and practices of their faith. These were prided by the soldier and in joining the Army, which enjoined observance of martial code, the Sikhs were at their best. The decimating efforts of the British right from the occupation of Punjab, and later viciously abetted by the Arya Samajists, were checked due to the residual glory of the *Khalsa Raj*, then by the timely revival of purity of Sikhism by wise and selfless Singh *Sabhaites*, leading to political focus on religious institutions by the Akalis. The reformatory efforts provided an excellent infusion of Sikh values. Signs of apostasy in defence services appeared much later. It permeated as an extension of influences from the breeding ground of entrants. The erosion in religious observances began from the upper echelons of the defence services. It was first observable amongst the officer class at a marginal level from late 1950s. It spread to lower ranks almost a decade later. Thereafter, generally unchecked, it continued to escalate, so much so that even some of the officers, who

sported turban throughout their service, today on retirement, are bereft of it.

Not in the services alone, we are gradually faced with a situation where the eroding base and conduct have deteriorated in profession of Sikhism, whereas mismatchingly and disastrously the imaginations and ambitions expounded are that of the lofty Khalsa.

Therefore, first and foremost, the urgency is of reviving our collective personality in the modern context.

APOSTASY : FOCUS ON SIKHS IN ARMED FORCES

Lt. Col. Partap Singh (Retd.)*

Dictionary meaning of apostasy is "abandonment of one's religion, a revolt from ecclesiastical obedience". In this brief study, it is proposed to examine in the historical and contemporary perspectives the extent to which the Sikh officers and men have lived up to the Sikh *Rahit Maryada* (Practice and Tradition), with particular emphasis on the importance of maintaining unshorn hair.

In fact, Guru Arjun Dev's dictum (G.G.S., p. 1084) — *Saabat Surat Dastar Sira* (Maintenance of the body in its natural form), implying preservation of hair without cutting, shaving or trimming, shows that removing of hair was a taboo right from the inception of Sikhism. Guru Gobind Singh codified, *inter alia*, thousands, who partook of *amrit* (initiation) on the blessed day of Vaisakhi in the year 1699, they not only strictly adhered to the Sikh *Rahit Maryada*, but automatically served as catalysts, inspiring others to join the Khalsa Commonwealth by setting example through immaculate conduct. The Guru frequently emphasised that to him *Rahit* was more important than the Sikh himself.

After Guru Gobind Singh's Viceroy, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, till the rise of the Sikh *Misls* (Confederacies), the Sikhs were subjected to the worst form of repression; price was put on their head, they were hounded and eliminated on sight under the Mughal's *Shahi Farman* (Royal decree). It was genocide no different from the extermination of Malecians by the Greeks during the Fifth Century B.C. and that of the Jews and Roma by Hitler in the 1930s and 40s. The Sikh response was one of total defiance. They had to leave their hearths and homes to hide and reorganise in jungles — plentiful in those times. It was during this period that *Akhand Path* came into vogue, for rare were the occasions when they had respite for any length of time.

There are innumerable examples that, when apprehended, they would gladly die rather than accept the alternative of cutting their hair or conversion to Islam. Bhai Taru Singh pleaded with the executioner to remove his entire skull rather than just the hair. That the spirit of defiance against tyranny had permeated at all levels of the Khalsa Brotherhood — old and young, men and women — is exemplified in an ennobling stand taken by a

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teenager who was arrested along with some 700 soldiers of Baha Banda Singh Bahadur's Army. Before being beheaded, each one of these dedicated men was given the option of saving himself by resiling from Sikhism. Not one exercised that option. When the courageous young lad's turn came, his mother rushed out of the crowd and pleaded that her son was a Hindu and not a Sikh. The boy retorted that the woman was not his mother and that he would live and die as a Sikh. Needless to say that he was immediately executed.

In the Sikh *ardas* (the daily prayer), there is special supplication to God eulogising the martyrs and sufferers for their sacrifices by maintaining their hair till the last breath. Such is the significance of hair in the Sikh tradition.

During the *misl* period and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, not only no Sikh soldier ever cut his hair or trimmed his beard, but almost all the officers and men even from some foreign countries as well as other Indian communities started growing and keeping their hair much like the Sikhs.

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849, a majority of opportunistic pseudo-Sikhs reverted back to their original religion. Interestingly, the British realised the importance of encouraging and virtually laying down the law that the Sikhs in the Army would strictly follow the tenets of their faith. It will be recalled that the British were greatly impressed by the Sikhs' valour and other exceptional qualities of soldiering during the many battles they fought against the Sikhs. Some historians opine that in conquering the Punjab, they met the most formidable resistance during the centuries long empire building. Consequently, the British absorbed a substantial number of the soldiers of the Lahore *Darbar* (Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Army) into the British Indian Army. Incidentally, the writer had the privilege of serving in a unit which was reorganised entirely from Ranjit Singh's Artillery, 2 Derajat Mountain Battery, which continued to observe inspiring traditions from the days of yore. During the initial training at the regimental centres, the Sikh recruits were initiated by administering *amrit* in strict conformity with the prescribed ceremony. When they joined their active units, the officers, mostly British, ensured that they continued to observe the Sikh *Maryada*. To set a personal example, many commanding officers and even some junior officers grew their hair and beards, attended the Gurdwara regularly, and even read Guru Granth Sahib, having learnt the Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script. Even after partition, this practice was adhered to primarily in the Sikh units such as the Sikh Regiment and the Sikh Light Infantry. In the Punjab Regiments, composition of battalions was mixed, i.e., Sikhs, Muslims, Dogras and others. But the companies, however, were composed of one community.

That ensured *esprit-de-corps* and healthy competition. Much the same applied to other arms; the Armoured Corps, Artillery, Engineers and Signals. How strictly the Sikh sub-units observed the *Maryada* depended on the inclination of the Commanding Officers and sub-unit commanders. It goes to the credit of the British rulers for creating among the various communities awareness of their religions and instilling in them the necessity for observing their tenets and traditions.

The writer had the honour of raising an Artillery Regiment, purely Sikh, with the strength of over 1,100 personnel. The Sikh code of conduct was strictly enforced. Although, under the Army Act, there is no provision for imposing religious discipline, the Commanding Officer can, on the authority of his Standing Orders, make, *inter alia*, apostasy a punishable offence. That indeed was done and during my four years command no Sikh officer, JCO or other rank could shave or trim his hair. A decade later, well after I had taken premature retirement, I was invited to visit the Regiment. It was painful to notice that quite a few men had trimmed their beards. Clearly, the succeeding commanders did not attach the same importance to this issue. Contrarily, sheer regimentation, in isolation, is not good enough. Inner conviction, which flows from proper motivation from childhood, is fundamental.

As is well-known, the number of Sikhs who observed or understood the basics of their religion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was small. In most villages, particularly in the Doaba and Malwa regions, whilst professing Sikhism, most indulged in non-Sikh practices like smoking, shaving and trimming of hair, supplicating at the graves of *Pirs* (Muslim Saints) and paying obeisance at *maths* and *deras* set up by Hindu *tantriks*, etc., practices strictly forbidden by Guru Gobind Singh. He exhorted the Sikhs never to visit *gor* (graveyards), *marhi* (cremation grounds) and *maths*. The Sikh VCOs and ORs, during their long annual leave and especially after retirement, set up gurdwaras in their villages, helped bring the waiverers into the Sikh fold, and dissuaded them against seeking favours at other places. During the Gurdwara Reform Movement in the early twenties, they played a herculean role. These brave men, disciplined and trained to defend themselves and to destroy their adversary, unflinchingly suffered inhuman atrocities and death, but exhibited exceptional courage to remain non-violent. They showed in practice what non-violence was all about. There is no comparable non-violent movement in the annals of human history.

Alas, despite more widespread education and awareness of Sikhism, the Sikh youth in large numbers have cut their hair, the pre-eminent symbol of the Sikh identity. As of now, a majority of the Sikh officers and men have gone the same way. How then can they set an example for others to emulate?

The writer has been occasionally visiting military academies. There are hardly any cadets with turhans. This is perhaps due to discrimination in selection and the fear of the Sikh candidates that their chances of making the grade, if they maintained their Sikh form, would be reduced. As against some 33% Sikhs who got selected during the British days, not more than 5% now enter these institutions. The same applies to the other ranks. Under the unconstitutional policy of proportional recruitment in the Armed Forces based on population of a particular state, the strength of the Sikhs would be reduced in due course to less than 2%. It would be a catastrophe for national security. I recall General Niazi's (Commander of East Pakistan Army) remark while talking to a Sikh General, "but for you *Sikhras* (derogatory word, said in levity), we would have long captured Delhi."

At the cost of a little digression, the role of Punjab Government, which has all along been dominated by Sikh ministers with invariably a Sikh Chief Minister, would be relevant. They have lacked commitment and courage to ensure that Sikh officers and men of the State Police and other agencies observe the Sikh *Maryada*. There is hardly any among them who has maintained *saabat surat*. Recently, policemen of certain category were made to replace their turhan by black *patkas* (piece of cloth to cover the head). That is the importance they attach to *Dastar* ! Such is the deviation, decadence and degradation that the Army, which is recruited from the same stock, cannot remain unaffected is obvious!

The S.G.P.C. and other missionary organisations like *Damdami Tak-sal*, parents and teachers have largely failed to stem the rot. This malady has become more widespread after the martyrdom of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale. Religious organisations have generally lost their sense of priorities and have started indulging in power politics, openly and subtly, as if there is dearth of Sikh political parties. That is yet another reason for apostasy among the Sikh soldiers.

Impact of Western culture has been so strong and pervasive that people worldwide have willy nilly adopted it. Sikhs are no exception. One would not be wide off the mark to state that more than any other section of the Sikhs, Armed Forces, Police and Civil Service officers have been most lax in educating their children about their religion and tradition, including the imperative of keeping hair.

In the end, having gone around the world a few times, I have observed that the Sikh, in his pristine form, is greatly respected in foreign countries. Curiously those who have shaven off, for whatever reason or compulsion, have not fared as well as those who have maintained their visible identity, even in economic terms.

APOSTASY AND THE FUTURE OF SIKHISM

Ms Alice Basarke*

Apostasy is a crisis looming in the Sikh faith. Apostasy is a problem affecting all religions in the modern world, yet for a multitude of reasons, Sikhs need to worry about it more than all others. A simplistic excuse is to blame western society and the modern world. Yet, there is nothing to be gained by blaming the modern world. Modernity is not the problem. Thousands of years ago, in ancient Greece, Cicero predicted that the youth of the nation would surely be its downfall because they did not conform to established norms and traditions. The Jewish Bible has many accounts of man's greed and search for wealth. Our own *Janam Sakhis* (oral history) has many accounts of man's greed and search for wealth. These have a story of Guru Nanak preferring the bread of a poor man to that of a rich man, because the bread of the rich man was made with the blood and sweat of the disadvantaged. Even a cursory look at history will reveal that man has always searched for happiness in material comforts. Yet throughout history we have seen that happiness is never achieved by wealth alone. Man continues to search for more. Man is made of body and soul. Both need to be satisfied. Sikhism is in crisis, not because Sikhs are looking for material wealth, but because Sikhs are not able to find direction.

It is naive to expect our children to remain Sikhs simply by osmosis. We need to teach them who they are and where they came from. Education is sorely lacking. The teaching of religion, its ideals and ethics is absolutely essential. The teaching of Sikh history will also help to establish a feeling of identity. Who will do this? Parents are unable, because for the most part they themselves have not been taught even the basic essentials. There is a lack of qualified teachers who can take up the challenge. There is also a lack of appropriate literature. The fact that Sikhs are dispersed over the entire globe complicates matters enormously. The universality of Sikhism comes from the fact that the basic teaching of Sikhism touches the human soul, no matter who you are or where on earth you happen to be living. Language and culture vary from one place to another, but the belief in one God, search for knowledge and truth, equality of man, honest living and sharing with others, has universal appeal. The challenge, therefore, comes in interpreting these teachings in

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such a manner as to be understood by one and all. Gurmukhi is essential to those who want an in-depth understanding of the Sikh religion. Because Gurmukhi is the language of the Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib. Scholars must master Gurmukhi. Before one becomes a scholar, one must understand in an intellectual manner all that Sikhism stands for. Translating Guru Granth Sahib into a multitude of languages is a step in the right direction. However, it is only a small step. Religion and history must be taught in the language of the people. Guru Angad made that very clear, when he spent a lifetime promoting Punjabi. That was the language of the people at that time in that place. Today, for many Sikhs, living in the U.K., Canada, U.S. or Australia, English is the first language. Others living in Singapore, Africa, Germany, Switzerland and elsewhere may have other languages as their first language. It is important to teach religion and history in the language understood by all. A thirst for knowledge may well be created, and some individuals may go on to study Punjabi and Gurmukhi. But basics must be first taught in one's mother tongue. Without understanding, there can be no thirst for more knowledge.

As stated before, man has a body and a soul. Man's need for religion demonstrates his spirituality. However, for a religion to succeed over the test of time, spirituality alone is not enough. There is the physical side. One has physical needs which affect one's moral values. One must know what the rules are. To know the rules, you have to seek direction. Modern technological sciences are evolving at a rapid rate. We cannot stop progress. But progress brings changes; in that, the questions that were not necessary before, must be answered today. These are vital questions that affect our everyday lives.

- Does Sikhism teach the sanctity of marriage ?
- Is divorce permitted among Sikhs ? — remarriage of divorcees ?
- Does Sikhism approve of inter-faith marriages ?
- Is abortion ever alright ? — Selective abortion of females ?
- Contraception ?
- Genetic engineering ? — Test tube babies ?, etc., etc.
- Must *langar* be eaten sitting on the floor. What's wrong with tables?
- Must *langar* always be vegetarian ? — Must it be *dal, roti* ? — What's wrong with ham and cheese sandwiches or pizza ? What has food preference got to do with religion ?
- Should we not be told clearly Sikhism's position on mercy killing ? — assisted suicide ?

- What is the position on homosexuality ? — same sex marriages ?

The inability to get consistent answers to the above and similar questions is a most serious problem. Over the years, I have written to the Akal Takht and the S.G.P.C. seeking answers. Not only were my questions left unanswered, but not once did I receive acknowledgment of them having received my letters. Locally, Sikhs have tried to rationalize that my letters were in English, and no one in Punjab could read them. Valid point ? I had my questions translated to Punjabi and again sent them to the above stated institutions. Again, no answer ... not even an acknowledgement of my existence. Just this week, a supposedly educated gentleman told me that if I meditate on the Name of God, there will be no need to ask such questions. I am not sure if it is because I am a woman, I should not ask questions, or because more broadly speaking, he does not acknowledge that God gave us a brain with the intent that it be used. None-the-less, these questions need to be pursued. Our Youth needs to know what the rules are before they can decide if they can live within this framework. To say that rules cannot be established because no one will follow them, is foolish. Roman Catholics are not permitted contraception or abortion. When they break the rules, they know that rules are broken. By knowing the teaching, they know who they are.

Education is important, but more specifically, who can Sikh Youth turn to for direction? There seems to be no institution in place that can provide much needed guidance. Gurdwaras today are not filling the needs of the people. Sikhs living outside India are being asked more and more often to participate in inter-faith meetings and social gatherings of all kinds. They are expected to explain the teachings and philosophy of their faith. In our increasingly multicultural society in Canada, we need this type of interaction to help promote understanding and harmony. How can we adequately meet the challenge when our own education is lacking and there seems to be no place and no way to get quick answers. We need a governing body that will :

- respond to and answer questions regardless of where they come from or from whom.
- guide the quality of education and training of *granthis*.
- encourage writers to produce more quality material.
- evaluate books before they become accepted as teaching aids in our schools.
- put a healthy stress on communication.

- take care of finances, making sure that money collected in gurdwaras is used wisely for the religious and moral good of the community in general and children in particular.
- standardise and provide guidelines for the awarding of *saropas*. As the highest award in Sikhism, it should come from one central governing body.

This governing body must be transparent and accountable to the people it serves. There can be no lifetime appointments. Every member must be a working member. This should not be a place for self-promoting attention seekers.

Rather than blaming modernity, we should study the administrative structures of modern corporations and governments. How are they successful? How do they cope with policy setting and communications? Guru Amar Das copied the Mughal system of administration when he set up his 22 *manjis* for Sikhism. We too can learn from others in setting up a more efficient way of dealing with life in the modern world. We do not have to re-invent the wheel, but we must find solutions to our problems as soon as possible.

Another important factor which contributes to apostasy and must not be glossed over is the inability of most Sikhs to differentiate between religion and culture. They have allowed Hindu culture to permeate their lives even though it often overrides Sikh religious tenets. Many of the customs practised in the name of culture are completely opposed to the teachings of the Gurus : caste, rituals related to food, the adulation of *sants*, inequality of women, etc.,etc. How can one forget that Sikh culture can only go back to the days of Guru Nanak ? Before then, there were no Sikhs.

In 1893, in his book *The Sikh Religion*, Max Arthur MacAuliffe made this observation :

"Hinduism... is like the boa constrictor of the Indian forests." "it winds itself around its opponent, crushes it in its folds, and finally causes it to disappear." ... "In this way, it disposed off Buddhism," ... "it absorbed the religion of the Scythian invaders off Northern India," ... "it has converted uneducated Islam in India into a semi-paganism; and in this way it is disposing off the once hopeful religion of Baba Nanak. Hinduism has embraced Sikhism in its folds," ... Its ultimate destruction is, it is apprehended, inevitable without state support."

Over 100 years later, MacAuliffe's prediction still rings with truth.

APOSTASY IN RELIGION — A COMPARATIVE VIEW

Sardar Surjeet Singh Bhatia*

Human mind by nature is endowed with an overwhelming centripetal pull of the self, which, particularly in youth, is so exuberant and overflowing with a naïve and unbridled self-confidence that it does not respect any restraints or checks imposed by others, especially the ones imposed by inexplicable religious taboos. The inquisitive nature of youth questions the logic behind every such belief, which is termed as faith and accepted as gospel truth. He challenges its validity and sets out to revolt against it. This is particularly so in the present age of scientific enquiry and logic. If his personal experience does not yield any convincing results, he begins to feel that religion is something untenable, illogical and, therefore, ostensible. He may go to the extent of calling it an opium, benumbing the sense of fortitude in man. He, therefore, throws overboard all religious observances and revolts against religio-social rules and establishments. This is the basis of apostasy which is today shared by all religions.

Common man's attitude towards life is "to drink the cup of life to the lees". To put it in the words of Shakespeare :

"What is life, 'tis not hereafter,
Present mirth hath present laughter".

This attitude is echoed in the words of Babar, the first Mughal ruler of India :

ਬਾਬਰ ਬ ਐਸ਼ ਕੇਸ਼ ਕਿ ਆਲਮ ਦੇਬਾਰਾ ਨੇਸਤ ।

This same idea is conveyed in the Punjabi saying :

ਮੁੜ ਮੁੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਹਾਨ ਉਤੇ ਆਉਣਾ, ਲੁਟ ਲੇ ਬਹਾਰ ਜੈਮਲਾ ।

This type of attitude towards life leads to self-indulgence of all types, in the individual character, and to social injustice, exploitation, inequality and anarchy at the social level. The imbalance and chaos brought about by this attitude not only leads to delinquency and frustration in the life of a person, it may ultimately lead to degeneration and even annihilation of human race. Religion, which ultimately means the realisation of the Ultimate Truth and reunion or merger with it, has been considered as the only hope for man, as

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it is the most potent force to contain the self in man. Overemphasis or overassertion of the self breaks the natural equipoise, and man is led to go astray from the path of religion — reunion with Truth. This abnormality is apostasy. -

Are there any inherent weaknesses or untenable, illogical and inexplicable presumptions in the ideological basis of Sikhism ? Are there some extraneous causes which have been imposing themselves so heavily that apostasy is posing a slighting threat to this religion ? I will examine this problem *vis-a-vis* other religions.

According to Duncan Greenles, a theosophist from the United States, there is no doubt that all religions advocate the pursuit of the Ultimate Truth, but it falls to the credit of Sikhism alone that it is so perfect and so thorough that it takes Truth to logical ends and allows no faltering and no let up, nor any arbitrariness or deviation from the postulates of Truth. There is, therefore, no scope for apostasy in Sikhism in so far as its ideological base is concerned. It would be in the fitness of things to elaborate this point with reference to other major religions.

Solidarity and wholeness of Truth *vis-a-vis* arbitrary divisions of the Truth : We do not have in Sikhism any such fantasies as the Biblical fable of Adam and Eve, man's suffering all through his life under the divine curse and his ultimate deliverance following his resurrection from the grave on the doomsday if he has had faith in a particular prophet during his lifetime. For this deliverance, he has to wait in his grave. This gospel, which is challenged by the youth today as arbitrary and fanciful, divides the Ultimate Divine Authority between God and the prophet, as it also divides man into men of faith and infidels — the latter to be condemned to suffer all the indignity, humiliation and torture, even elimination during their lifetime and fire of hell after their death. Even holy men have to wait in their graves for resurrection and ultimate deliverance through the recommendation of the prophet. This has led to bigotry on the one hand, and worshipping and seeking blessings from the dead in graves (particularly in Islam) on the other. In the case of Christianity, they have come down from the Formless and Fathomless God to the worship of the statue of Christ.

Again the all-pervasiveness of the Ultimate Truth is faltered in so far as the Muhammadans say their prayers while facing the Ka'aba. Then circumcision is a purely arbitrary observance and women, who cannot undergo this, get a secondary status in all walks of life.

The ultimate aim of all these Semitic religions is deliverance and heaven, which are purely individualistic and, therefore, selfish. There is no

such thing as welfare of all (*sarbat da bhala*). Thus, in place of merger with the Ultimate Truth, the self remains supreme in these religions. Seeds of revolt and, therefore, apostasy lie in the very bases of these religions.

Youth today, as also through many centuries of the past, has been challenging and revolting against the so-called religious sanction behind the Brahminical fourfold division of man into high and low castes, i.e., *varan ashram dharam*, which leads to the exploitation of men of the lower castes and their suffering all the inhuman indignity and humiliation, simply because of their birth, generation after generation, and allowing them no chance of uplift and improvement, not even proximity to religion even in the present age of enlightenment. The plight of women, though they have given birth to kings has been no better than these downtrodden people. Even today they are not allowed to recite the Vedas.

The Divine authority of Brahm (God) has been divided into various gods and goddesses, representing various phenomena and forces of nature, to be propitiated for various needs of man, so that there are as many deities (33 crores) as the needs of man. You have to please different *devis* and *devtas* through different *mantras* on different occasions, leading to a perpetual dependence upon the priestly Brahminical class, who has thrived upon the exploitation of the common man through many centuries. This division of the divine authority and the ritualism attached with it has not only divided man into such clans as Shavites, Vaishnavites and so on and so forth, but has also led to an unending subjugation to the Brahminical dominance.

Arbitrary selections have been made on the earth. Certain places, rivers, mountain peaks or caves have been selected to be holy ones and called *sirathas*, like Hardwar, Kashi, Nasik, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Ganges and Amarnath, etc. A visit to or a bath there on particular occasions leads one to heaven. But there are some condemned places like Maghar which lead to hell.

Even time has been divided as auspicious or inauspicious for pilgrimages or baths at holy places, like the days of the full moon or the new moon. Then certain days are considered ominous for the inauguration of business or fixing marriages in accordance with certain constellations of stars. Even the birth of a child under certain constellations has been considered as ominous or inauspicious. Does not all this religiosity make a man think of casting it off as arbitrary and untenable? Guru Arjun says in very clear terms that all occasions are equally auspicious :

ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੂਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ।।

All months, days and moments as such are auspicious.
As the Lord's Grace have obtained.

Personality cult in religion is another form of deviation from the wholeness of Truth. The mythological personalities as those of the Puranic heroes or heroines like Narsingha, Hanuman or Durga, etc., are unreal fantasies, mere figments of imagination. The historical personalities like Rama or Krishna, howsoever great in their times, had the limitations of human weakness, in addition to their limitations of working in a given situation at a particular place and a given time. How can their behaviour be considered as ideal or universal. The same is the case for such personalities as Gautam Buddha and Mahavira or other *Tirathankars* of the Jains. The concept of their being *avtars*, i.e., incarnations of God (or Vishnu), has been devised to strengthen the faith in them. *Avtar* or incarnation, for all intents and purposes, implies giving a particular person in human form a status equivalent to God Himself. The formless Truth is reduced to human form to be born and die like ordinary mortals. This in its turn leads to idol worship.

Again, personality cult implies considering a certain human being superior to others and vested with Divine powers on purely arbitrary considerations. This is in contradiction to the idea of equality of all men. The divine right of the kings, personality cult and blind faith in certain socio-political personalities like M.K. Gandhi, is an offshoot of this concept. Personality cult inculcates the idea of considering the so-called superior person as the ideal for man, which in its turn would curtail human progress beyond such a personality. A human being, howsoever great, is always imperfect and has his short-comings. Personality cult has the seeds of degeneration of the human race.

In Sikhism, the ideal, therefore, is none less than the Incomprehensible Ultimate Truth — The Creator Himself.

The Brahminical approach to religion through the division of the divine authority, the division of man and that of nature as well as place and time is purely arbitrary, designed particularly to uphold the superiority of the Brahminical class and exploitation of the common man by alluring him to achieve worldly pleasures during lifetime and *mukti* or heaven in the after world. Thus, it ultimately feeds the self in man separating him from others.

WHOLENESS OF TRUTH

In Sikhism, the very idea of division is given up altogether and it firmly adheres to the concept of the wholeness of Truth. Herein the entire physical reality — the perceptible truth and the imperceptible and Fathomless Ab-

solute Reality — are considered as one big impregnable whole. The diverse forces and phenomena of nature, including man as well as time and place, are considered interlinked together in cause and effect relationship to bring about a harmoniously integrated and living unity working under the direct and single handed control and supervision of the Master Creator — The Ultimate Truth. This brings all men as well as all the phenomena and forces of nature on a single uniform plane of working under a single unitary authority of His Will. All arbitrary divisions, preferences, superiorities and exploitations are done away with, and an equality of uniform submission to His Will is considered as the plane of equality. The working unity between the Creator and the creation, in terms of their unstinted and uniform submission to the Will of the Creator, is self-revealing.

ਆਪਨ ਕੀਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਜਾਪਿ ।।

G.G.S., p. 290

Himself has He raised creation;
Himself in it is manifest.

It is, therefore, scientific as well as logical. This concept leaves no scope for any arbitrariness or deviation from the unity of the Truth.

ਕੂੜ ਗਏ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਨਸੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਚਿ ਭਰੇ,
ਪਾਚਥ੍ਰਹਮ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੇਵਦੇ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਏਕ ਧਰੇ ।

G.G.S., p. 136

Falsehood from them shed, duality gone —
With truth are they made replete.
With the sole Lord in their selves lodged.
The transcendent Supreme Being they worship.

Equality, equipoise, harmony and unstinted submission to His Will form the key note of this concept. *Sach, shabad, Naam, Hukam* and *Sehaj* are the terms used to denote and qualify this concept. Strictly adhering to the wholeness of the Truth makes this religion unique as well as distinct. It is this perfection in religion which has to be guarded against while living life according to these postulates of the unbreakable unity of the Truth.

Sikhism advocates a complete merger with the totality of the impregnable unity of the Truth. But, the chief divisive force is the human mind, which is a concentrate of the self in man. It is no doubt endowed with certain tendencies and faculties, which combine together to form what is called self-confidence, which in its turn enables man to pull through life as an

individual. This self-confidence, if unbridled, crosses the limits of equipoise and *sehaj* and assumes the proportions of self-assertion and ego, which measures and evaluates everything around in terms of self-aggrandizement. Through overemphasis of this tendency, man creates around him a sphere of his own will (ਖੁਦੀ) as against the Supreme Will of the Creator (ਖੁਦਾਈ). Thus, a duality between *khudi* and *khudai* is developed. In place of submission to the Supreme Will, he goes to the extent of boasting to bring down the Supreme Will too under his suzerainty.

ਖੁਦੀ ਕੇ ਕਰ ਬਲੰਦ ਇਤਨਾ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਤਕਦੀਰ ਸੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ,
ਖੁਦਾ ਬੰਦੇ ਸੇ ਖੁਦ ਪੂਛੇ ਬੜਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਕਿਆ ਹੈ ।

— Iqbal

This duality between the self and the Supreme Will, i.e., *khudi* and *khudai* is the root-cause of all arbitrariness, deviation from the path of the wholeness of Truth and, therefore, all types of apostasy and delinquency. It should be very clear that we have to bow before the Supreme Will rather than think of dictating terms to Him.

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੇਤੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਕਹੀ ਬਣੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ।

G.G.S., p. 474

With the Master is not commanding effective
Right it is to make supplication.

The self in man has to be tamed and tuned to bring it in the ambit of the order of the living and integrated unity of the Truth. Of course curbing the self in man to complete submission and abdication to His Will is a stupendous task, equivalent to walking on a dagger's edge.

ਖੰਨਿਅਹੁ ਤਿਖੀ ਵਾਲਹੁ ਨਿਕੀ ਏਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਜਾਣਾ

G.G.S., p. 918

Sharper than dagger point
Finer than hair breadth is the way they traverse.

To put it in the words of Sheikh Farid —

ਖੰਨਿਅਹੁ ਤਿਖੀ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਪਿਈਣੀ ।
ਉਸ ਊਪਰਿ ਹੋ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਮੇਰਾ ।।

G.G.S., p. 794

Sharper than the sword narrow in extreme
over such a path lies my way.

Of course, curbing the self in man is a term to be used with certain qualifications. Keeping a balance between the upsurge of the mind to ego and its depression to such an ebb as to be overawed by some other person is the level plain like path to be adopted.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਮਨੁ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਕਰਿ ਟੇਏ ਟਿਥੇ ਲਾਹਿ ।

ਅਗੈ ਮੁਲਿ ਨ ਆਵਸੀ ਦੇਜਕ ਸੇਦੀ ਭਾਹਿ ॥

G.G.S., p. 1381

Farid! make thy mind straight from ups and downs of passions.

Then mayst thou escape the furnace blast of hell.

Farid prefers death to slavery as he says :

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਇਐ ਬੈਸਣਾ ਸਾਂਈ ਮੁਝੇ ਨ ਦੇਹਿ ॥

ਜੇ ਤੂ ਦੇਵੈ ਰਖਸੀ ਜੀਉ ਸਰੀਰਹੁ ਲੇਹਿ ॥

G.G.S., p. 1380

Lord, Farid begs this of Thee : Give me not to hang on another's door for favour : Should such be Thy Will, take then this life out of my body.

This is the path of equipoise — *sehaj* — all temptations which are the source of apostasy and delinquency have to be put down to submission to Him — and Him alone through daily *Ardas*.

For keeping the mind in a state of equipoise, a resort has to be made to *shabad*, which like a true guide — *Satguru*, pulls you out of the quagmire of temptations, self-indulgence and ego. Surrendering the mind to *Satguru* is the only way out (ਮਨ ਬੇਚੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ). *Satguru* is not any human personality, but the Divine Authority Himself defined in terms of *shabad*, as enshrined in *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The very concept of self-confidence or self-reliance is to be transformed to complete reliance upon the Divine Authority, and this brings about a complete reversal of the attitude and outlook of life. The centripetal force of the self is converted to centrifugal force directed towards *Satguru*. You view things not from the selfish point of view, but from the point of view of the Ultimate Truth — *Hukm*.

ਆਪੁ ਛਡਿ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਪਰਣੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਆਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਏ ॥

G.G.S., p. 919

Discarding egoism, on the Master leans,
In nothing else his trust reposing.

Mind by nature is very sensitive, turbulent as well as inconsistent. It is easily distracted and allured by any of the extraneous influences prevailing around. So, it is very necessary to create an atmosphere of attachment and involvement with Truth. This is provided by *shabad*, *Gurbani*, which in essence is the spirit of Truth, and like a Guru, has the capacity to tone down the self in man, save it from all distractions and bring it in unison with the working unity of Truth. This atmosphere is created by the Sikh observances of daily recital of *Gurbani* — the *Nitnem* in the morning, at dusk and before going to bed with full concentration. A visit to the *sangat* — congregation of Sikhs in the gurdwara — involved in singing *kirtan* and discourse about the interpretation of *Gurbani* in the morning and evening is considered as good as meeting God Himself, since the *sangat* is considered as the image of the Supreme Being, as God Himself resides in the *sangat*.

ਵਿਚਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਸੈ ਜੀਓ ॥

Sri Rag M. 1

Ardas before the Guru is a daily exercise of toning down the mind for submission and obedience to the Ultimate Guide — *Satguru*. "Humility is the essence of all virtues", says Guru Nanak and even this is to be begged for. For this ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾ ਮਤਿ ਉਚੀ, ਮਤਿ ਕਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ is conscientiously begged for in *Ardas*. The reply to the *Ardas*, provided by the *Hukamnama* — a *shabad* taken out at random from Guru Granth Sahib and read out loudly — provides the thought and lesson for the day. A brief prayer before every meal implies thanks to the Master, the Grand Provider for the universe. Then the outer symbols of Sikh identity create an aura of obedience and dedication to the Will of the Supreme Being — *kesh* (unshorn hair) represents obedience to His Will; *kangha* (comb) represents keeping the body, which is provided by Him and is considered His abode (ਹਰਿ ਮੇਦਰ ਇਹ ਸਰੀਰ ਹੈ), clean and in tip top form; *kara* (steel bangle) represents being wedded to Truth; *kachh* (breeches) represents restraint from passion; and *kirpan* (sword) an independent conscience. Taking *Amrit*, which is a must for every Sikh, is a pledge for lifelong devotion, dedication and obedience to His Will — and His Will alone — recognising no other force, attraction or even the self.

It is to be noted that all this is not for attaining any worldly comforts like wealth, etc., in this world, nor for attaining heaven or deliverance (*mukti*) in the after world. All this strict discipline is for the sake of Love for the Truth. In fact, Sikhism recognises Truth in the form of Love, and is to be approached through love alone. The necessary discipline for love is devotion and dedica-

tion, not self-aggrandizement. Thus, there is no place for building the self in man.

Apostasy in Sikhism comes when you leave the discipline of love and dedication to the Ultimate Truth and follow the self in you. When the self in your mind, i.e., *manmat* (ਮਨਮਤਿ) prevails and becomes the guiding force in life, you deviate from the teachings of *Gurbani*, i.e., *Gurmat* (ਗੁਰਮਤਿ), and fall in the lap of apostasy which is the mother of all vices.

ਜੇ ਤਨਿ ਥਾਣੀ ਢਿਜਰਿ ਜਾਇ ।

ਜਿਉ ਪਕਾ ਰੇਗੀ ਢਿਲਲਾਇ ।

G.G.S., p. 661

One that of the holy Word is forgetful like a leper wails.

This deflection into apostasy may be due to some of such extraneous factors as enumerated below :

- i. Our own negligence.
- ii. Growing swing towards materialism or adopting a materialistic approach to life.
- iii. Christian missionaries in America, fearing the challenge being posed by youth today to the fantasy of the Biblical fable, and the youth being swayed by the unfaltering Sikh approach to the Truth, have started a campaign of challenging the very authenticity of Guru Granth Sahib and have thus started a wave of dissuasion from *Gurbani*.
- iv. Tendency of some scholars to treat *Gurbani* as a piece of literature and applying the methodology and instruments of literary criticism, particularly the analytical approach to *Gurbani*. Analytical approach is in contradiction to the concept of the integrated totality of the wholeness of Truth, which is the subject matter of *Gurbani*. The concept of the whole fritters away, if broken into pieces through analysis. This approach, therefore, leads you astray from the aim of *Gurbani*, which aims at creating a unity between man and the Truth.
- v. The Government of India in their concerted effort to deny the Sikhs a separate entity and absorb them in the so-called national mainstream of the majority, which is Brahminical to the core, is behaving like a boa constrictor to devour Sikhism. For this purpose, they have been trying to discourage the teaching of Punjabi — the language of Guru Granth Sahib, diluting Sikhism by introducing and encouraging such movements as Sant Nirankari, Radha Swami, etc., separating Guru Gobind Singh from the

other nine Gurus, harassing *Amritdhari* Sikhs, vilifying the concept of *Amrit* and discriminating against Sikhs in all types of services, particularly in the army and higher echelons of administration.

Strength to take a firm stand against all this lies in sticking to the Sikh ideological base, i.e., following the teachings of *Gurbani* in life and spirit, and maintaining their distinct identity by meticulously avoiding all that which can be summed up as *bipran ki reet*.

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ ।
 ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ਼ ਦੀਓ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ ।
 ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੇ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ।
 ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰੋ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ।

APOSTASY AND SIKHISM

Brig. Hardit Singh (Retd.)*

Apostasy amongst all the world religions is widespread. Whilst it does not show up in the other faiths, it becomes immediately apparent in the case of a Sikh when he starts tampering with his hair, discards his turban or starts smoking. Guru Gobind Singh had bestowed distinctive personality to his followers so that they look like lions (Singhs), while the rest are difficult to identify.

The main causes for apostasy are : i.) lack of parents' and teachers' influence; ii.) lack of propaganda (*parchar*); iii.) mismanagement of Sikh institutions, schools, colleges and gurdwaras; iv.) influence of bad society; v.) exposure to TV; vi.) sheep mentality; and vii.) wrong conception that a person without hair and turban looks smarter, more attractive, and has a better chance to gain employment and win favour of non-Sikhs.

All the above ills stem from lack of knowledge of Sikh history, traditions, ideology and ethics and consequently loss of confidence in Sikhism. People are unaware of the Sikh character and the sacrifices made by them to maintain its glory and identity since its birth in 1469. Late Bhai Vir Singh had once remarked that the sacrifices made by the Sikhs to maintain their identity in the eighteenth century alone are so vast that if the heads of all the martyrs are put together, these could not be accommodated in the pavement of the Golden Temple's periphery.

Sikhism is the latest and youngest religion in the world, about 530 years old. It is the fifth largest religion in the world. It is revealed and original, and is not based on borrowed opinions and concepts of other systems. The Gurus from Guru Nanak (birth 1469) to Guru Gobind Singh (death 1708) have given humanity the highest truth and ideals based on their personal experience and spiritual touch with the Divine Light. What they have stated in Guru Granth Sahib, — Word of the Guru (*Gurbani*) is God's Command (*dhur ki bani*) — is Truth. Truth is the source and fountain-head of all godly qualities. There are numerous verses to support the claim that *Gurbani* is the revelation of God.¹

No Guru ever staked an exclusive claim to prophethood. Instead, they professed themselves as "Lowliest of the lowly, with no ambition to move with the high".

* 1380, Sector 33-C, Chandigarh.

Guru Granth Sahib is the repository of divine wisdom. As compared to other scriptures, it enjoys many distinctive features. It was compiled and installed in the Golden Temple by Guru Arjun Dev in 1604, whilst the other scriptures were written after the demise of the prophets. Guru Gobind Singh, before his demise in 1708, anointed it with due regality as the perpetual Guru of the Sikhs. It contains writings and sayings of 31 *bhagats* (saints) and bards of medieval India of all denominations, including Muslims, hailing from all corners of India. Their *bani* enjoys full respect and honour as that of the Gurus. Unlike other scriptures written originally in Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit and Pali, Guru Granth Sahib is scribed in a common language which is understandable by majority of Indians. It is, therefore, accessible to the common man.

Here are a few quotations of some important personalities regarding Guru Granth Sahib :

Duncan Greenles : "Among the world scriptures few, if any, attain so high a literary level or so constant a height of inspiration".

Swami Brahama Nand : "For years, I practised yoga without any achievement. The peace and bliss that I have found in reciting 'Waheguru' as mantra has surpassed everything else.

"Sikhism is complete. The teachings of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh are nectar. There is nothing higher in the world than the *Gurbani*".

Swami Ram Tirath Dandi Sanyasi : "Its literary level and height of inspiration have not been reached by any other scripture. I appeal to the entire humanity to recite *Gurbani* and live upto it.

"Sri Guru Granth Sahib represents the sublime and pure spirit of God. It is complete and unmatched... a superb guide for the entire humanity".

The basic principles of Sikhism, in a nutshell, are outlined in the *Mul Mantra*. It also spells out the attributes and concept of the Supreme Being. It reads :

<i>Ek Onkar</i>	:	One Supreme Being
<i>Satnam</i>	:	Truthful Reality
<i>Karta Purakh</i>	:	The Creative Personality
<i>Nirbhau</i>	:	Without Fear
<i>Nirvair</i>	:	Without hate
<i>Akal Moorat</i>	:	Eternal Form (The Immortal)
<i>Ajuni</i>	:	Unborn
<i>Saibhang</i>	:	Self-Existent

<i>Gur</i>	:	Wisdom Divine (Enlightener)
<i>Parsad</i>	:	Grace, Omnibenevolence

Guru Granth Sahib is the exposition of the *Mul Mantra*.

The human body according to *Gurbani* is the abode of God. In it, He has put Eternal Light.² As such, we should have all the characteristics and attributes of God ingrained in us as spelt out in the *Mul Mantra*, but we are not aware of this spiritual potential because of our materialistic orientation. Once we are tuned to Him, we shall see that all the spiritual, metaphysical, philosophical, social, cultural and political aspects of Sikhism, as under, are covered under it :

EK ONKAR : Unity as well as diversity. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humanity irrespective of religion, castes, creeds or races. He is both transcendent and immanent. Sikhism advocates meditation upon His transcendence (*Nirgun-Nirankar*) aspect.

SATNAM : The whole *drama* of life is true and real. It should be lived truthfully and dynamically. The aim of human life is to attain Truth. The way to Him is through *Naam* which is also True — (*Naam Japna*).

KARTA PURAKH : God is the Creator, Destroyer and Sustainer. If He is at work, so should be His devotee. This leads us to earn our living (*kirt krana*) and to share it with others (*wand-chhakna*). Renunciation and asceticism are prohibited.

NIRBHAU-NIRVAIR : Necessity for individuals and society in which fear and rancour are non-existent. Equal status, opportunity and security for all.³

AKAL MURAT : God is Formless, Timeless and Spaceless. His Form is His creation, His love, beauty and bliss. He cannot be installed,⁴ as such idol worship is not allowed.

AJUNI-SAIBHANG : God does not take birth, so *Avtarvad* is rejected.⁵ He is self-created and self-luminous. This aspect leads us to freedom, sovereignty and liberation.

GUR PARSAD : God is embodiment of Light and Grace. His devotee has to be benevolent, compassionate, noble and sweet.

The ideal of Sikh life is the destruction of egoism and the means to this end is the willing acceptance of His altruistic Cosmic Order (*Hukm*). This needs humility and self-surrender.

Hereunder, some opinions of world known authorities are given about the Sikh religion :

Duncan Greenles : "So pure and spiritual religion as theirs has already a great place among the religions of the world".

M.A. Macauliffe : "..., it would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system".

Swami Brahma Nand : "I had wasted my life in frivolous pursuits whilst the basic true divine spirit is in the house of the Guru. I have to take a new birth in Sikhism to achieve salvation".

H.L. Bradshaw : "Sikhism is a universal world faith with a message for all men.... It is the *summum bonum* for the modern man. It completely supplants and fulfils all the former dispensation of the older religions".

There is a scriptural injunction on the maintenance of unshorn hair and wearing of turban in Guru Granth Sahib, (p. 1084) which states "*Sabat soorat dastar sira*". *Sabat* means that is whole, unshorn, un-altered and pure in its original form. *Dastar*, a Persian word, is turban and *sira* is head. Collectively it means, a person replete with full physical features inclusive of hair as granted to him by God with a turban to adorn the head. Hair and turban is the crowning glory of a male and this has been the traditional bearing and dress of our *rishis*, gurus, saints and *bhagats*. A Sikh is not complete without his turban, which he supports all the time.

Bhai Nand Lal Goya had maintained that the Sikh identity cannot be separated from his personal appearance. A person without full hair cannot call himself a Sikh. Bhai Taru Singh's demand to his executioner to remove his scalp instead of his hair, bears testimony to this conviction. Wearing of a cap is strictly against Sikh tenets.

Prof. Pura Singh in his book *Spirit of the Sikh*, Part II, page 56 writes : "The Guru's commandment in asking the disciples to preserve their hair unshorn has in it an abiding depth of truth, giving men some deeper concerns of the soul, for thereby he has precluded men and women living only for the futile foppishness of sartorial arts or the barber-made civilization. The hair seem redundant to the modern man, but to Guru Gobind Singh, the hair was essential... for bringing on of a great moral and religious civilization." He further writes that if the Sikhs are left free to cut or shave the hair, how foolish it would be to preach a religion and to demand whole herds on compromised principles ! Taking away the Sikh's hair is to cut him off from his intensely reactive inspiration and source of strength.

In his book, *The Spirit Born People*, page 38, Prof. Pura Singh further says that wearing of the "the Master's knot of sacred tresses" is "a token of spiritual isolation from the herd. So did Guru Gobind Singh command. An

obedience to him is life. There is no life outside that Great Love."

The numerous martyrs whose deeds are narrated in the daily Sikh *Ardas* lived true to the tenet of faith of retaining unshorn hair till their last breath of life.⁶ The foremost request of a Sikh is for the grant of Sikhism and hair.⁷

A highly placed Sikh officer who had shaved off his hair was walking in a crowded street. A *tongawala* in his rear shouted, "Oh *Lala*, get aside". The officer looked around and repented; had he been a Sikh wearing his turban, the *tongawala* would have addressed him as "*Sardar ji*, please get on one side". He soon returned to his original and natural form after this bitter experience.

During Bhai Vir Singh's time (1872-1957), a Sikh youth settled abroad sheared his hair and sent his photograph wearing a solar hat to his parents with a justification that one should change according to necessity of life and circumstances. The parents approached Bhai Sahib for help. The letter which Bhai Sahib wrote in Punjabi to the apostate is translated below :

"Respected Sardar Sahib,

We are greatly surprised and disturbed to read your letter. Bowing against one's faith and form is the result of slavish mentality which had been caused by our continuous subjugation under the forcign rulers. Guru Nanak embarked to take this weakness out of us. With utmost regards for the wishes of his respected parents and elders to remain at home to look after them and his young family, he preferred to go out on his hazardous mission of world emancipation. He did not bow before Kaaba, but demonstrated the omnipresence of God in all directions. He did not bow to Kauda Raksh, but sat in his cauldron filled with boiling oil. Guru Angad boldly faced Emperor Hamayun's drawn sword and reminded him of his cowardliness in front of Sher Shah Suri; Guru Amar Das did not agree to comply with Emperor Akbar's instructions to preach Hindu mode of worship. Guru Arjun did not include Prophet Mohammed's praise in Sri Guru Granth Sahib but faced death and severe tortures inflicted on him by Emperor Jahangir. Guru Hargobind refused to part with Emperor Shahjahan's falcon which fell into the hands of his Sikhs, but fought a battle at Amritsar which he won to assert the rule of game. Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa and taught them to stand on their ideals, to fight injustice and oppression and never to give in. He blessed his Khalsa with a dominating personality and strong character which does not bow to any physical, mental or moral weakness.

"Bhai Taru Singh had asked his executioner to remove his scalp (*khopri*) along with hair rather than cut his hair. Bhai Mani Singh had his limbs cut to pieces rather than cutting his hair. The other martyrs like Bhai Shubeg Singh did not abjure their faith.

"The British ruled India for three centuries, but they never wore Indian dress. We, the Indians, due to slavish mentality, started wearing Pathan's dress during their rule and aped European clothes during the British regime.

"Our Gurus taught us to remain firm to our convictions and resolve. The spirit of independence they inculcated, helped the Sikhs to establish an empire in northern India, which unfortunately was lost due to treachery.

"Hair is our uniform, our identity and symbol of devotion and dedication to our Gurus. Hair with a turban bestows *sardari*. Guru Gobind had made the Sikhs as lions (Singhs). Do not lose this privilege and identity and do not break your relationship with the Gurus.⁸ Please grow your hair and come to meet us in your original form to gladden our hearts".

On receiving this letter, the Sardar relented and returned to his original form and faith.

The present wave of apostasy in Sikhism is not new. A bigger wave was witnessed soon after the collapse of the Sikh Empire in 1850, but was gradually stemmed with the emergence of many saints, notably Sant Attar Singh, Singh Sabha Movement and the Akali Morchas of 1920s. A concerted drive is again needed to bring back the apostates by building up their confidence in Sikhism, which being modern and temporal, has a message for the entire world. Towards this end, following measures are suggested :

- a. Mass movements at different levels on the line of *Chetna Lehar* initiated by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, under the holy auspices of the Akal Takht. Under this scheme, seminars and training camps for both teachers and youth are being held at various places.
- b. Intensification of *parchar* in gurdwaras, particularly in villages.
- c. Opening of schools and colleges on the pattern of Akal Academy, Baru Sahib (H.P.). The working of the present Khalsa schools and colleges also needs scrutiny for improvement.
- d. Management of Sikh institutions, federations, S.G.P.C. and gurdwaras leaves much to be desired. The following aspects need attention :
 - Elections should be based on consensus rather than on votes.

- Ostentatious ceremonies must be avoided.
 - *Langars* should be more for the poor, invalids and visitors.
 - Running of *Gurmat* and music classes for children.
 - Handicraft courses for unemployed.
 - *Gurmat* seminars and libraries.
 - Arranging of marriages of poor women irrespective of caste or creed.
 - Availability of basic medical facility.
 - Avoidance of wasteful expenditure on buildings and gold-plating. Money thus saved should be utilised to provide aid to deserving schools and colleges and scholarships to poor children.
 - Care of old and destitutes.
- e. The Sikh *Ardas* gives a vivid narration of the sacrifices made by the martyrs to maintain their identity in the face of death, particularly to preserve their hair intact. An illustrated book of their great deeds should be published in Punjabi, English and Hindi for wide circulation.
- f. Opening of small scale industries and technical training institutes for gainful employment of youth.
- g. Our *parchar* should lay emphasis on eradication of rites, rituals and ceremonies, which have subtly crept into our fold and to reform ourselves both internally and externally according to the tenets of *Gurbani*. *Amrit* should be administered by known *Gursikhs* to only those who beg for it. This will ensure sanctity of *Amrit* and good projection of Sikhism.

Apostasy can be effectively checked by instilling confidence in Sikhism. The Sikhs should take pride of their Sikh birth, of great Guru Nanak being their Guru and of their glorious heritage.

Sheikh Ahmed Deedat, *The Toronto Star*, July 11, 1994 :

The turbaned Sikh looks like a lion;
The rest of us look like sheep and goats,
afraid to be identified.

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1. Guru Nanak Dev : I convey the Word of the Lord, as it comes to me.
 Guru Ram Das : Know, all ye Sikhs, that *Gurbani* is true, and ever true.
 The Creator conveys it through my mouth.
 Guru Arjun Dev : I myself know not what to say,
 All I utter is the command of the Lord.
2. "Mun toon jot sarup hain."
3. a. "Sadh samuh purson phire jug."
 b. "Bhey kahun ko det neh, naehbhey manant aan."
4. *Thapaya na jae, keeta na hoe, ape ap niranjan soe.*
5. No Guru ever staked an exclusive claim to prophethood. Instead they professed themselves as "Lowliest of the lowly, with no ambition to move with the high".
 Guru Gobind Singh has gone to the extent of saying that "Whosoever calls me as God is condemned to hell."
6. "Dharam nahin haria, Sikhi keshan swasan naal nibhayi."
7. "Sikhan nu Sikhi dan, kesh dan."
8. *Khalsa mera roop hai khas.*
 Khalse mein haun karo nivas.

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH

Sardar Surinder Singh *

Apostasy among the Sikh youth, which may have developed in the recent past or over a long-drawn period, cannot be considered in isolation with the apostasy in the Sikh nation as such. In case apostasy in the Sikh youth is, broadly speaking, no more than that in the elder section of Sikh society, our debate could as well become unwarranted and result in being counter-productive. Therefore, before a debate on apostasy among Sikh youth is purposefully conducted, its exact extent has to be properly assessed, whereafter alone its causes and cures can be analysed. This is a very delicate subject and has to be dealt with very carefully and very deftly. The Sikh youth, like youth all over the world, is a very volatile section, equally influenced by the theory of generation gap and independence from traditions.

The quantum of apostasy among Sikh youth at present is only a subjective assessment consisting of hypothetical conjectures of Sikh elders, which in all fairness can be correct as well as incorrect. During the last three centuries, various methods of assessment of social problems have been developed, popularly called survey systems. It is a fact finding study, in which the researcher obtains information from large representative but diverse and widely scattered sections, and thus, assesses the particular phenomena or characteristics which exist in the larger society. Without going into the system of sample surveys, which started in the Western World with the advent of industrial revolution, such surveys have been commonly used in India for the last over half a century. During the last couple of decades, its frequency and methodology have greatly improved, and fairly correct assessment of our national problems, especially of our elections, etc., are forthcoming. Half a dozen organisations like Marg, Mode, Vanaich, etc., can take up serious studies with fair accuracy.

Further, while assessing apostasy, different areas will have to be taken separately, viz., Sikh youth in Punjab and nearby areas, Sikh youth in the rest of India and the Sikh youth abroad, especially when we are fairly disturbed over increased non-keeping of hair and thus violating Sikh Rahit Maryada. It is, therefore, considered that a proper assessment of apostasy in Sikh youth or Sikh community as a whole through a proper analytical survey

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is an absolutely essential pre-requisite before the causes of the malady, and thereafter its cures, can be ascertained. Otherwise, this august assembly in the words of Firdusis' *Shahnamah* would be :

*Pai Mushwara, Majlis Arastand,
Nashistand, Gufftand, Barkhastand.*

For the sake of deliberations, an assembly has been arranged, it has been seated, it has discussed and it has been dismissed.

During the twentieth century, Sikhs have faced three major confrontations, viz., (i) Gurdwara movement in nineteen twenties, (ii) *Morcha* against emergency (iii) *Dharam Yudh* after the Blue Star operation. In the first struggle, the participation of Sikh youth was negligible, and the main force was that of elders. In the second agitation, Sikh youth did make substantial contribution, but in the third struggle of *Dharam Yudh*, the main brunt was borne by Sikh youth.

Thousands and thousands of Sikh youth participated in the last struggle for their faith and religion. Their fervour and dedication for the sake of their religion was so exalted that they had little or no hesitation in laying down their lives, which is the ultimate form of human sacrifice. Thousands of them have been maimed by police and security forces, and thousands are rotting in Indian jails. Appreciating the extraordinary sacrifices made by Sikh youth, I am unable to pin the charge of apostasy on them, although ritualistically and otherwise, there are visible signs of apostasy in the Sikh youth as well as the entire Sikh community. When I observe that my children, the Sikh youth of today, are going astray from Sikh traditions, a lurking guilt in the inner recesses of my heart and mind reminds me of my own failure in their upbringing, and I cannot absolve myself for the visible signs of apostasy in my children.

The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, at the time of his demise, abolished personal guruship. He placed his spiritual guruship in the Holy Granth, and advised his followers to seek spiritual guidance by reciting and following the tenets laid therein. He also placed his temporal sovereignty in the Sikh nation as a whole, and collective decisions of the Sikh nation bore the sanctity of the approval of the Tenth Guru. During the period of most intensive persecution of the Sikhs and their families in first half of eighteenth century, when price was laid on every living Sikh head, Sikhs had left their homes and sought refuge in the nearby jungles. They took with them their arms, families and Guru Granth Sahib. Whenever they had any respite, they would recite from Guru Granth Sahib to seek spiritual and moral guidance. Women and children also listened, and imbibed the Sikh tradition. With

passage of time, the reading of the Holy Book from cover to cover came in vogue, which today is called *Sadharan* or *Akhand Path*.

Hundreds and thousands of *Sadharan* or *Akhand Paths* are being held daily on occasions of joy or sorrow. A well-defined ritualism has come into existence. It is a very desirable situation in which our Guru's word is propagated in several thousand places almost daily, but, there is a very vital difference in what our elders did, I mean the elders of bygone times, and what we, the elders of today, are doing.

Whereas our elders who started the tradition of *path*, read the Holy Scripture and the entire groups, men, women and children listened to it with reverence, today's *paths* are being carried out in gurdwaras, with half a dozen or so priests reciting simultaneously and none listening to them. After completion of the *path*, an *ardas* is offered and blessings of the Guru are sought for the person or the family who paid for the said *path*. I am pained to say that we have slowly gone back to the abysmal ritualism from where our Gurus led us step by step to a stage of grand bliss, where we listened to the holy words and tried to follow them and true Sikhism prospered. This, too, is an apostasy, which has to be attended to by the guardians of Sikh ethos and tenets and bring it back to the purpose and manner as propagated by our Gurus. A couplet of Bahadur Shah Zafar very aptly portrays our situation :

*Na thi hal ki jab hamen apni khabar,
raihe dekhte auron ke aib o hunar,
Parhi apne gunaon pe jab ke nazar,
to nigah me koi bura na raha.*

When I was not aware of my own conduct, I was all the time trying to assess the faults and accomplishments of others. But when I was able to look at my own faults, then in my assessment, there was no person with any faults.

Earlier *bhais* and *granthis* of our gurdwaras had a respected place in Sikh society. Their knowledge of *Gurbani*, their service to the gurdwara, and their humility were respected by all. But with the advent of prosperity, a number of old gurdwaras are being renovated and larger numbers of new gurdwaras are being constructed, and the place of the humble yet venerable *bhais* has been taken over by quarrelsome managing committees indulging in commercialism rather than service of the community, and *bhais* and *granthis* have come down to be merely paid employees. This gap between the clergy and the masses has also contributed to apostasy in general. Iqbal has correctly described this situation in his poetry :

*Masjid to bana li shab bhar men,
Iman ki hararat walon ne,
man apna purana papi tha,
barson say namazi ho na saka.*

The mosque was set up overnight by those possessing the zeal and fervour for the religion, but their heart was old sinner and could not become religious over years.

The aggressive religious zeal seems to have slowly taken place of the devout mind of the Sikhs and the spiritual warmth edging towards fundamentalism. This too is a form of apostasy taking root in the Sikh community.

Without going into details, my suggestion is that apostasy in the Sikh community both in the elders and the young be analytically surveyed by a competent professional organisation. Once we know the extent and areas of apostasy, the representatives of the Sikhs should assemble to analyse the causes and plan curative steps to be taken. I have no doubt that in case this exercise is conducted in the spirit of our early 18th century *Gurmattas*, and not like the meetings of Sikh political groups of today, the Sikh youth will once again rise to the occasion and bring fresh bloom to the Sikh ethos.

APOSTASY IN SIKH YOUTH – THE REAL ISSUES

Sardar Anurag Singh*

During the last four decades, the Sikh community has been witnessing the death of the fine values of Sikhism at the hands of our self-styled political saviours and *Panthic* leaders. There is no religion in their religious activities, religion as propounded by the Sikh Gurus, expounded by the Sikh mystics, saints, theologians and scholars, and nourished and kept alive by the martyrs of our history to uphold the lofty principles of the Khalsa brotherhood. In the last forty years, these so-called *Panthic* leaders have wilfully and callously killed something most precious in the hearts and souls of the people. While history rushes on and the world moves on, making one hundred years of stride every twenty-five years, we have allowed our religion to be downgraded and dragged down the road of humiliation. Equally shameful is the apathy of the Sikh masses, which has been aptly summed up by Sirdar Kapur Singh thus : "The Sikh masses have become altogether unconcerned to matters of quality or standards in public affairs. The present condition of the Sikhs is not that of a people who have gone to sleep, which would be a tragedy anyhow, but which tragedy could be redeemed by sincere and earnest leaders. The tragedy of the Sikhs, at the moment, is that they are a people who have gone completely pervert and cussed. Now, only a miracle can save them".¹ Even at this belated stage we are talking about apostasy in the context of youth only, and that too in respect of trimming of their *keshas*, (hair and beard) and to some extent use of intoxicants. Apostasy has been defined as : abandonment of religious faith, vows, principles or codes; abandonment or renunciation of one's religious faith or moral allegiance; morally depraved, etc. Initiation in Sikhism has never been a ceremony for merely converting people to the New Faith, but it has a positive purpose to bring about a complete change, a new life and a new outlook. It is the inner illumination of the mind and heart. If it does not, in any way, alter the heart of the recipient, there is then something seriously wrong either with the recipient or those who have administered baptism to him. If the recipient is a deserving seeker, ready for living according to the vows of an initiated Khalsa (*adhikari*), and if those who administer initiation are morally and spiritually competent to administer *amrit* initiation, the novice will certainly experience an inner illumination, a spiritual rebirth (*punar janam*). The seeker dies to the world and is reborn

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in the spirit of the Eternal Guru. Accordingly Guru Gobind Singh gave a lasting assurance :

He alone is my true Sikh
 Who lives according to moral laws (*Rahit*)
 Know him to be my master
 I am a humble disciple of such a Sikh.
 He who does not live according to moral laws,
 Has no right to call himself a Sikh.
 He who lives not according to the Rules of Sikh Moral laws,
 Can never know peace and happiness.
 So everyone should live according to these moral laws.
 And thoroughly imbibe the spirit of moral and spiritual life.²

Suraj Prakash relates a very interesting story of a hypocritical movement that emerged during the time of Guru Gobind Singh with perfect Khalsa form and un-Sikh-like living from within. The Hindu Brahmins started keeping hair and beard, and wearing all the five K's or *kakars* (Khalsa symbols). Dressed in white attires, but without being initiated and without living according to Sikh *Rahit* (Code of Conduct), they went to Sikh homes and demanded tithes as the superior caste Khalsa. They insulted the Khalsa coming from low castes and asked them to practise all Hindu rites and ceremonies, which were prohibited by the Commandments of the Sikh Gurus, recorded in the *Rahitnamas* (Compendiums of Moral Laws and Spiritual Discipline). Guru Gobind Singh came to know about it and summoned these cheats for punishment. He warned the Khalsa that the Khalsa should not be judged by mere appearance, but also by his morals, his disciplined living and his devotion to the ideals of the Khalsa. If you have Sikh appearance, but at heart you are a Brahmin, or you practise religious disciplines (*darshan*) which are strictly prohibited, then you are a hypocrite, a cheat and a charlatan. The Khalsa should be judged by his inner life as well as outer discipline. Mere putting on the Khalsa symbols does not make a person a Khalsa.³ Guru Gobind Singh had also emphatically declared : *Rahit piari mo ko Sikh piara nahi*, "It is Sikh-like living and character which is dear to me and not merely being a Sikh in name and form." Even during the time of Guru Gobind Singh and during the post-Guru period there were four types of Sikhs :

- i) Those who became Sikhs for commercial motives — *dhande de Sikh*
- ii) Those who accepted Sikhism formally to imitate Sikhs for material gains and to exploit Sikhism — *dekha dekhi de Sikh*
- iii) Those who became Sikhs for personal or family ambitions, be they religious, social or political — *hirsi Sikh*

iv) Sikhs who are dedicated and sincere in faith — *Sidaki Sikh*⁴

Even in our Invocatory and Congregational Prayer — *Ardas*, we daily pray for *Sidak* thus;

Lord, give to the Sikhs :
 The gift of charity,
 The gift of sanctity of hair,
 The gift of disciplined life,
 The gift of tolerance and trust,
 The gift of all gifts : The Divine Name, (*Naam Dan*),
 And the gift of ambrosial ablution
 And glimpse of divine presence at Amritsar.
 May the abiding centres of Khalsa legions,
 And the Khalsa flag of Freedom and justice
 Ever remain upheld from age to age.
 May victory ever be of righteousness (*dharma*)

In this august assembly of learned scholars and enlightened Sikhs, I would like to stress the need of discussing the problem of apostasy not in the limited sense, under Common Minimum Programme, but in the wider context of Commandments of Guru Gobind Singh, recorded in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh,⁵ Bhai Nand Lal⁶ and *Rahitnamas*.⁷ The Sikhs and Sikhism had always been attacked and damaged by the deceptive postures of Sikh-like appearance of the Minas, Dhirmalias, Masands, Ram Raiyas (during the Guru period), Niranjaniyas (during the *Misl* period), Nirankaris, Radhasoamis, Tantric Sakats, Communists and atheists working as hostile scholars in our colleges and universities presently. Let us not give encouragement of this *bhekh di Sikhi*, rejected and reproved in the Sikh Scripture, the *Rahitnamas* and the works of Bhai Nand Lal, etc.

The Sikh Gurus condemned the deceptive postures of Brahmins,⁸ Mullahs,⁹ Yogis¹⁰ in their innumerable hymns, and in each hymn they have laid stress on inner-life according to their respective school of thought. In this context it is all the more imperative to feel the problem and not merely talk about the problem, to create Sikhs in mind, body and spirit and not in appearance only.

GENESIS OF THE PROBLEM

A Sikh is not a born Sikh, even if born into a family of Sikhs. Without being initiated with *Amrit Pahul*, he is simply a novice. Without being initiated and given vows of religious discipline, we cannot accuse such novice of apostasy, i.e., breaking the vows of his religion. Instead of grooming our children in the Sikh way of life, making them strong in will power, spiritually

enlightened and well-versed in *Gurbani*, we leave them alone in the world of illusions (*maya*), sins, murky politics and materialism. Herein lies the role of parents, educationists and the Sikh *Panth*, and I have no hesitation to say that in this context the parents, the educationists and the leaders of the Sikh *Panth* have all treated these children with irresponsible abandon, with the result that even in our so-called Khalsa Schools and Colleges the number of students with trimmed hair and beard is not only on the increase, but is alarming. Once we groom our children in the Sikh way life, educate them in the religious and cultural ethos of the Sikhs and enlighten them about Guru Granth Sahib, these very children shall be setting the shining example of the type of Khalsa Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh wanted to create. I must say that uptil now there is no sincere and concerted effort in this direction, and we are unnecessarily finding faults in modernism, T.V. and electronic media, society, Government policies, politics, fashion, etc. There are only two root-causes, i.e., family environment and education. We cannot deny the fact that there are thousands of youths in India and abroad who are true Sikhs in mind, body and spirit, and that they have fought their battles for the sanctity of their religious symbols, i.e., *keshas* (hair and beard), *kirpan* (sword), *pugree* (turban) and preserve their identity, and have succeeded to uphold the lofty principles of the Khalsa brotherhood throughout the world. They are also living in the same modern era, same social, economic and political environments, T.V. and electronic media. The only difference is that they were groomed, educated and trained in the Sikh way of life properly and sincerely, and their faith is on the rock-foundation which cannot be shaken even by the mighty winds of illusions, persecution and tyranny. History has produced such martyrs in the past and we all remember such noble souls in our *Ardas*, Invocational and Congregational Prayer. Such noble and enlightened souls have been produced even recently, and memory of the heroic deeds of more than 1,25,000 youth who have laid down their lives during and after the murderous Operation Blue Star is still fresh in our minds. Hence, the problem is not with the youth, but with the parents, the educationists, the Sikh institutions, and last but not the least, our Political Saviours. Renewal and reform of our institutions, education system and revival of our old traditions is overdue, and it should be taken up in right earnest immediately to preserve the pristine purity of the Khalsa brotherhood. But let me record a word of caution. Let us not, in the foolish spirit of romance, think that we alone can regenerate Sikhism. It is the collective responsibility of the Khalsa *Panth*, and by Khalsa *Panth* I mean all the functionaries of the Sikh Institutions (gurdwaras, schools and colleges), Missionary Ingroups (*Nirmalas*, *Nihangs*, *Udasis*, *Sewa Panthis* and *Sant Samaj*), the Head Priests of all the five *Takhts*, Sikh scholars and Sikh divines.

They should be called at Akal Takht twice in a year as per our old traditions¹¹ to assign them their respective role in *Amrit Parchar* (Initiation) in their respective areas and propagation of Sikhism by organizing *Kirtan durbars* (*Shabad-ka-langar*), *Katha* (interpretation of Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh history) and distribution of free literature and audio cassettes on fundamental beliefs in Sikhism. At the same time, the five Sikh divines (*Panj Piaras*) should also periodically review the progress of such missionary programmes through inter-net at Akal Takht.

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 - i) *Ibid*, Guru Nanak, *Rag Suhi*, p. 730, *Rag Gauri*, p. 233, *Rag Maru*, p. 1042, *Rag Ramkali*, p. 703, *Siddha Gost*, pp. 936-43.
 - ii) Guru Gobind Singh, *Dasam Granth*, *Shabads* 1-2, *Rudra Avatar : Vishpada*, pp. 97-98.
11. According to Bhai Mani Singh's *Sikhan di Bhagtnala*, Guru Amar Das on the recommendation of his prominent missionary Paro Julka (*Param-hansa*), introduced the system of annual national cultural gathering of the Sikhs from all over the country on Vaisakhi to meet the Guru, to discuss the problems of the Community and to review the missionary work done by the *Masands* in their respective dioceses.

SIKH YOUTH : THE GOING GENERATION

Sardar Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa*

At this Conference today, we are being asked to deliberate over the weighty question on which the entire future of *Gursikhi*, this Guru-Sikh *Dharma*, depends, and that is the question of the youth and the rising apostasy. Simply put, let us ask, "Is it they who are wrong in leaving? Or is it possible that we, the elder generation, who assume ourselves to be wiser, are wrong in staying where we are?"

What is there in leaving? Guru Nanak did not leave. Guru Arjun Dev did not desert *Gursikhi*. Neither Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Gobind Rai — though they were all no more than teenagers when they assumed the temporal and spiritual responsibilities of Guru.

What is it our young are running from? Is it that *Gursikhi* has become no more than a hollow body of customs and rituals. Where is the innocent, all-embracing spirit of Guru Nanak in what we today call our religion? If the youth leave, what future is there of *Gursikhi*?

Our parents assumed that we would honour them, that we would carry on their traditions and follow in their footsteps. Today, we can no longer feel safe in such assumptions. The world has changed. It is no longer ruled by honour and tradition. Social life has become highly unstable. Relationships come and go. It is an age of knowledge and choices, opportunities and technological revolution.

In the free market of concepts, lifestyles and ideologies, parents must spend time actively promoting and teaching their children what they hold near and dear. They cannot assume that schools or TV will make their children good Sikhs. They won't. Most children need a caring example at home, and a thoughtful guide somewhere who can answer their questions and heal their doubting minds. Unfortunately, examples and guides can be hard to come by in this increasingly secular culture.

Moreover, today's generation is not as submissive as their elders were at their age. They are marked by a rebellious strain. Some of them say, "I will respect what is respectable. Not otherwise". They do not make a show of respect on a say-so basis. Some say they are headstrong, but they are

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following in the footsteps of the great rebel, Guru Nanak Dev.

Guru Nanak studied the religions of the saintly people he met in his childhood and youth and during his travels in later life. After the Indian subcontinent had suffered some six hundred years of domination from foreign ways of thinking, speaking and worshipping, sometimes cruelly inflicted by the sword, Guru Nanak established a new dynamic faith, a growing community, which stood confidently on its own and ably resisted the efforts of others to undermine or suppress it. The growth of the Sikh *Panth* shook the foundations of the Mughal empire and challenged those who lived by facile and narrow-minded concepts of religion.

Sikh missionary activity extended to Afghanistan in the West, Assam in the East, Hyderabad in the South and Kashmir in the North, a vast expanse of territory encompassing many millions of people. Back then, people went by Guru Nanak's words, "*na koi Hindu, na Mussalman*". To the optimistic, it may have seemed that everyone was a Sikh in the making — in any event they were not overly concerned with religious boundaries.

Guru Nanak Dev toured with his Hindu and Muslim companions. Guru Arjun invited Mian Mir to lay the cornerstone of the great temple in Amritsar. Guru Gobind Singh accepted the able assistance of Pir Budhu Shah and Gani Khan and Nabi Khan. Hindus and Muslims alike joined the banner of Banda Singh Bahadur. Unlike the most holy Hindu temples or the Kaabe of Islam, the Harimandar was built to receive the devotion of people of all religions. Guru Granth Sahib itself was, and remains, a happy mixture of Sikh-Hindu-Muslim personalities, terminologies and dialects.

People loudly proclaimed, "*Hindu da Guru, Mussalman da Pir, Nanak Shah Fakeer*". Guru Nanak's stock in trade was not a body of abstruse philosophical conjecture, but some very practical guidelines for living happily in this world and gaining ultimate salvation. The medium of expression was neither the Arabic of the Koran nor the Sanskrit of the Upanishads. It was the common people's language filled with ironies, humour and an impassioned richness of expression. Moreover, the touchstone was nothing less than a fulfilled, authentic life. "*Sachon ore sab ko uppar such ahaar*".

Now our living is rather less than authentic. We have, to a large measure, adopted foreign customs of speech, dress and behaviour, and are vexed and obsessed with who we might or might not be. A hundred year ago, we said, "*hum Hindu nahin*". Today, we are busy delineating who is and who is not a Sikh — all for the sake of the number games we have inherited from colonial times — elections, censuses, communal weightage, etc.

These, my friends, are the symptoms of a religion in decline. Guru Nanak was obsessed with only one number. One. Everywhere he went, he looked, and he found the Oneness. What we are doing, is making a sad mockery of Guru Nanak's religion.

Today, we are haunted by Hindus and so-called "brahminism". We are preoccupied with religious boundaries, though we pay no mind to the mindless punditry and senseless ritual displays that we have allowed to enter the gurdwaras.

In the Punjab today, there are at least five missionary colleges. The ones in my knowledge are located in Amritsar, Damdama, Patiala, Ropar and Ludhiana. At least one of them was boldly established under the nose of the British during the colonial period. One or two of them have, in their time, sent a handful of *parcharaks* to Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. For years, however, these colleges have been "missionary" in name only. Is it that they do not know the meaning of the word ? Have they no confidence ? No courage ? No integrity ? Do they feel the House of Nanak has nothing to share ?

Earlier this year, I asked a man very senior in the S.G.P.C. organization this question. He told me that *Gurusikhi* is weak in Punjab. Therefore, it cannot afford to send missionaries abroad like the other world religions, Christianity and Islam. Is it so ? If it is so, why is the effulgent House of Guru Nanak so weak even in Punjab ? How can we speak of the greatness of our Guru and our religion, knowing this to be so ? How can we say "*Raj karega Khalsa*" ? How can we speak of "960,000,000", knowing this sad fact ?

While outwardly most Sikhs, even members of the S.G.P.C., might bemoan the apostasy of those family members who have migrated to the West, it would appear that inwardly they celebrate it. In the imagination of many, anyone who has settled in Canada has entered *Sach Khand*. Once they have bought a house and two cars and successfully married off their children, they are considered equivalent to a *jiwan mukt*. It does not matter that they have practically disowned their religion, and that their children neither look nor behave like Sikhs. They have attained life's ultimate happiness. Why should they bother about *Gurusikhi* ?

Many of the *ragis* and *parcharaks* are mercenaries in disguise. They come. They sing. They tell stories. They collect their money. They go home. No one has trained them to minister to the real spiritual needs of the *sangats*, to teach them to live as real *Gur-Sikhs* in a feeling of *charhdi kala*.

The Gurdwara Management Committees do not care either. They

look after their own interests. They build more buildings. They run for elections. They go home. Most of their members do not care about the future of *Gursikhi* ! They do not bother about Sikh children and youth. How many gurdwaras have a library ? How many libraries have even one book that might educate and appeal to the younger generation, to show them how worthwhile it might be to be a Khalsa ? How many videos do they have that might inspire the youth ?

¹ Is it any wonder that the children run ? They run from boring sermons. They run from joyless authorities. They want to escape from senseless observances, from *gianis* who talk too much and know too little. They want to get away from people, who do not care and do not listen. They want to hide from arrogant, intolerant people who call themselves "Sikh". They want to run from blind, self-serving leaders. They want to get away from narrow, humourless people, who want to impress others with their age and status. Is it any wonder ?

What is the younger generation to make of the confused state of affairs they see around them ? What are they to think of the limited vision and double-mindedness of so-called "leaders" ?

This is a very bright generation. They have an innate sense of right and wrong. They have not yet become foolhardy and contrived in their affections. They have no love of hypocrisy and lip service. They like to learn, to give, to share, to have fun. They will not follow us blindly.

Let us rekindle the light of Guru Nanak. Let us set the brave example. Let us share the exemplary Truth. Then let us see.

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH — CAUSES AND CURES —

Sardar Gurhachan Singh*

Though unfortunate and undesirable, apostasy among the youth of almost every religion is a common observation, and is on the increase with the so-called development of living standards in modern times. Young people are losing faith in religious values, beliefs and customs with the rise in material values. Scientists are emerging as rivals of Almighty. Today, human life is being created outside the mother's womb and the span of life is being elongated, the two important natural functions now being performed by the scientists. This has created doubts amongst the youth regarding the existence of any invisible controlling force. In fact, science is only unveiling to a limited extent various phenomena that are taking place in nature; yet such discoveries do create doubts among the youth, who are liable to go astray if not educated properly and adequately.

Requirements of social and religious behaviour from the Sikhs are comparatively more strict as per tenets laid down by the Gurus, who had set high ideals with personal examples of sacrifice, service and humility. Apostasy among the Sikhs is commonly attributed to tampering with the '*keshas*' and trimming of the beards, which is readily visible. Keeping unshorn hair is the basic requirement of a Sikh. So as to give a separate identity to the Sikhs, the tenth Guru had prescribed this as a uniform for them. It is claimed that the Sikh religion is '*Nirala*' — unique — and to uphold this claim, the Sikhs take pride in adorning this uniform. Because of the stricter discipline imposed upon the Sikhs, it requires greater effort and self-control to imbibe these ideals. Guru Gobind Singh had made the Sikhs : ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ, ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਉ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ । Therefore, the Sikhs have to naturally take pride in the history and legacy of the Gurus under all odds.

It need not be repeated that the issue under discussion is vital and an all out war has to be waged to persuade not only the youth alone, but every Sikh against this tendency and check them from becoming *patits*. It is high time that full energy and resources of the *Panth* in every respect be utilised to

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stop this menace, otherwise it will have very serious consequences for our identity. Even today, some Sikh girls, particularly educated ones and those belonging to affluent families, openly say that they want to marry clean-shaven boys. Similarly, some Sikh boys feel that they look smarter by trimming their beards, and consider it cumbersome to keep unshorn hair. This is a painful fact, and remedial measures are very essential.

Often youth alone is blamed for this degradation. But, actually every section of the Sikh community is equally responsible, directly or indirectly. I vividly remember that in mid-forties, when I was a teacher at Khalsa College, Amritsar, a student trimmed his beard. Principal Bhai Jodh Singh sent for his father so that the boy could be dissuaded from this practice. The father of the boy met the Principal, who had not mentioned to him the purpose for which he had called him. The father too had trimmed his beard. A very disturbing fact about this practice may be particularly mentioned that disrespect to the *keshas* is quite common amongst the army and police personnel and also among highly placed civil service officers. The staff of educational institutions set up by various Sikh organisations are not free from the menace. So it is not the youth only, who can be blamed for this menace. The entire set-up and the emerging trends are mainly responsible for this degeneration. There could be no greater shame than to watch a Sikh getting his beard trimmed from a road side barber.

Principals of Sikh colleges and schools openly regret their inability to dissuade the students from refraining from such activities. I do not absolve the Principals or the students of their responsibility, but every section of the community has to consider its own role in the prevailing situation and shall have to devise measures to make a positive contribution in maintaining the Sikh traditions.

The main reason for the present situation is the overall degradation in social values. The way of life, in the garb of development, has changed. Plenty of means of entertainment and sources of enjoyment are available through audio, video and press media. Social contacts and religious congregations have considerably decreased. Under such developments, moral degradation, probably, is a natural consequence.

The first step in the Sikh society has to be towards restoration of old religious practices. Early rising, cleaning the body, paying reverence at a gurdwara and recitation of *bani* before the start of the day's work have to be ensured. The basic concept of Sikh religion is *sangat*, gathering of people at a common place. Grown-ups have to practise this tradition unflinchingly and small children have to be trained to follow this practice. If this course is

adopted by children from an early age, this practice will enter into their blood and would form a habit with them. One would feel a vacuum and something missing the whole day if one cannot undertake this routine any day due to unavoidable reasons. The Sikh traditions have to be readopted. In small villages and towns after day's work, people used to visit the gurdwara where a session of *katha* after *rehras* was held. I remember, in our town, this session was very important and attractive. A Sikh having a sweet voice made recitation from *Suraj Parkash* and a grand old man, headmaster of a girls middle school, paraphrased the same with illustrations from Sikh history in a fascinating manner. This was a great attraction for the youngsters also, and was a source of inspiration and entertainment for people of the town.

Selfless service, sacrifice to get justice, preaching and practising truth, simplicity and austerity are cardinal principles of Sikhism. We have drifted away from these principles, and consequences have followed. We too, like others, have become ordinary people. *Niralan* — uniqueness, is absent. We have started earning and gathering wealth by fair or foul means like ordinary citizens and then taking pride in vulgar display of ill-earned wealth at marriages and other functions. Cocktail parties have become fashion of the day and probably this is more apparent in functions of Sikh families. There is a tendency to exhibit our wealth and superiority in our clothing, in our eating habits and in other ways of living. Extravagance has become a way of life, particularly among the affluent families, and others try to follow. Attention of the community has to be diverged from such practices. *Mohalla* and village *panchayat* system of the past has to be revived to restrict people from showing off their riches and imposing their superiority over others. In pre-independence days, often social hindings were enforced on incurring expenses on such functions. Limits were laid down on the size of a marriage party, even on the menu to be served and the extent of dowry. These unwritten rules were a barrier, which could seldom be crossed even by the richest or the most respected persons.

Training of human minds towards the right path has to start from a very early age. The training in observing the religious code has to be a part of routine training of the child, like training of standing, walking, eating and dressing, etc. This has to be spontaneous and automatic. At this stage, parents have to play a prominent role in bringing up their children in such a way that children grow to become religious minded and good law abiding citizens. Earlier, mothers would invariably tell small children *Bol Waheguru* while pouring water over their bodies for a bath and would say words of gratitude to *Akal Purakh* on having bestowed new clothings upon their children. These days, such benevolence is taken for granted. Small children

would flock round their parents or grandparents at night before going to sleep with a request to tell them *sakhis*, i.e., heroic stories of great Sikhs and their valour, bravery, courage and sacrifice for a noble cause. Thus, children got inspiration from their heritage and developed emotions that would prevent them from going astray throughout their lives. Now parents as well as the children flock round their T.V. sets.

In doing their duty, parents will have to be available to their children for guidance. They might have to surrender the pursuit of certain activities like club life and evening parties, etc. The whole family has to be united for recitation of *Rehras* so that the children learn about the mode of the life of a Sikh. The child has a strong tendency to tread the footprints of parents. Slowly and steadily, the children will acquire the characteristics of their parents, unnoticed and without any effort. Discussions about Sikh *Maryada*, history of Sikh martyrs and sacrifices made by the Gurus should be initiated in Sikh homes and the children should be made active participants.

The child grows and starts going to a school and then to a college at a little later stage. Here comes the role of a teacher in guiding the students on required lines. Besides imparting instructions in a particular subject, the teachers owe responsibility to mould the character of the students. A little warning here might be useful. The student has a keen observing power. The student may not speak out, but he/she very well knows the good and the weak points of the teacher. A student is the best judge of a teacher. A teacher cannot afford to bluff or to earn cheap popularity among the students. Though such trends are visible these days, such acts can only be short-sighted and short-lived. Not only the teachers' actions but even their thoughts are clear to the students. Thus, a teacher has to be a super-human being and has to act as a tower of light, so that the students get motivated. Whereas a teacher has to exhibit exemplary conduct and character, the managements of Sikh institutions too have a responsibility to perform. Proper selection of a teacher is pre-requisite. All personal interests and extraneous considerations, other than merit (both academic and character wise), have to be fearlessly and forcefully rejected while making selection of a teacher, who has to play the role of a nation builder. It is not an uncommon occurrence that *patits* on the promise of keeping unshorn hair have been offered very high and remunerative jobs. Such incentives do not improve the quality of a person, but, on the other hand, demoralise the straight forward, truthful and sincere followers of Sikhism.

There is a frequent demand from schools and colleges for appointment of religious teachers. The emphasis of religious training in schools is

that the students learn *Gurbani* by heart and recite the same regularly. This could be done at homes and also by adopting old practices as stated earlier. There is hardly any emphasis on making the students understand the basic principles enunciated in *Gurbani* and much less on their actual practice in life. The most important aspect of religious training has to be to mould the character of students. In my opinion, every teacher has to be a teacher of religious training in addition to his/her normal teaching assignment. A teacher of exemplary character, who performs his/her duties conscientiously, is fair to the students, is regular and truthful, is sincere to his/her duties and has the interest of the students foremost in mind, is an ideal teacher and can immensely influence students by his/her actions and behaviour. No special teachers can perform any miraculous function in the absence of these qualities.

Environment and social set-up do affect the thinking and actions of individual members of a society. Therefore, social structure norms of the society and social laws have to be such that they help bringing up a child in the desired direction. Our customs and religious practices based on blind faith alone cannot have a balanced impact on the young mind. The young today need a truthful and practical code of conduct. All our preaching has to be oriented in this direction. Due consideration will have to be given to the religious practices going on in our gurdwaras. A uniform *Maryada* has to be practised in all our religious congregations. Here, the Sikh organisations like S.G.P.C., Chief Khalsa Diwan, Sant Samaj, etc., can play a major role. The managements of all gurdwaras, local and historical, have to be involved. Practices sanctified under the Sikh code alone be allowed in all gurdwaras. The undesirable rituals and superstitions, for whose eradication our Gurus made tremendous sacrifices, should not be allowed to be repeated. *Brahminwad*, which is very prevalent amongst us, has to be eliminated. The *sewadars* in gurdwaras have to be properly trained and guided by arranging frequent camps under the guidance of well-versed preachers. Of course, the *sewadars* have to be well-educated, fluent in the teachings and practices of Sikhism and of course, they have to be paid well to attract talented persons.

To conclude, we all have to unitedly and whole-heartedly make an all out effort to change the direction of trends that are eating into our religion and culture.

SIKH YOUTH AND HINDUISM

Sardar Nanak Singh Nishtar*

1. PREFACE

One philosopher said, "Show me the youth of a community or country, I can tell you its future." Our attention towards the problems of youth and sincere efforts to redeem our glorious past will definitely help us to push the *Panth* towards *Charhdi-Kala*. A proverb says, "Train a child the way he should go."

At the outset, I am not so much disappointed at the decline of Sikhism among the youth. It is naturally affected by the global environment, which is going steeply downwards. I am more disgusted to see what is being transmitted by the elders, who are escaping from their responsibilities of practising, training and bringing up of the coming generation. Each one of us accuses the youth and the preachers, *ragis*, *granthis* and the organisations for lack of their knowledge, vision and duties. We quote the examples of Jew, Christian and Muslim communities. Have we ever analysed the working of their institutions, organisations and individuals? The spirit lies in the individual efforts of their people. Everyone of them tries to acquire, practise and preach the wisdom of their scriptures, faith, rituals and customs, and more specifically for extending charity to the people of their own faith. The helping hand, extended towards an individual to come up successfully in life, produces a dedicated missionary for their community. Automatically, he is obliged to react in the same manner with other fellow beings. This is also bringing prosperity and a sense of duty among those communities. Every person feels the moral binding to display his gratitude towards his community to bring up his fellow beings, as he himself was brought up by others.

Now, it is not necessary for us to continue to be the prisoners of our own web of mistakes. Let us take stock of affairs and seek guidance from *Gurbani* and Sikh *Rahit Maryada* to come out of this entrapment.

ਇਸੁ ਪਦ, ਜੇ ਅਰਥਾਇ ਲੇਇ, ਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ, ਚੀਨੈ ਆਪ ਕਉ, ਸੇ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

(ਮ. ੧, ਪੰਨਾ. ੨੨੮)

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2. VIVEK DAAN

Let us start with *Vivek Daan*, i.e., blessings for sense of discrimination between good and bad, which we seek during our daily *ardas*. Sikhism is not only a religion as such, but a simple, practical, complete and effective art of living. *Gurbani* repeatedly preaches against any division of mankind by way of religion, caste, creed, birth and sex.

ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ, ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ ॥

ਨਾ ਕੇ, ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ, ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥

(ਮ. ੧, ਪੰਨਾ. ੧੦੩੫)

When the Sikhs of Guru Nanak were distinguished after his name, then the tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh transformed them into "*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa*", i.e., disciples of Guru hereafter belonged to the Almighty. He declared "Humanity is one religion", and said in *Akal Ustat* :

ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ, ਸਥੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੈ ॥

(ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ, ੧੯)

That is how we were ordained to disown the barriers of religion, and not only the sub-castes as misinterpreted. The pollution penetrated into our faith, when we failed to completely disown the Hindu religion. In fact, Hinduism is also not a religion by itself. It was founded by nobody, no definition or code of conduct is prescribed for it by anybody. This misconceived and misguided name has been attributed to the Indian Civilisation in the perspective of Islam and Christian religions.

Instead of preserving the teachings of our Gurus, we generously accommodated the customs, rituals and ideology of other religions, even though those were condemned by our founders. Thus, we paved the way for assimilation into other systems and put a question mark on our own and separate identity. As such, without discarding the old and torn clothes, we are wearing new ones over them and making a spectacle of ourselves. This is the first step we have taken towards our fall, for which we are crying now. On the other hand, those who have adopted Christianity or Islam in much larger numbers, have turned completely and are practising their new faith *in toto* and true spirit. There lies their strength, which has helped them to spread and get recognition.

ਤਾਰੀਖ ਕੀ ਆਖੈ ਨੇ, ਜਿਹ ਦੌਰ ਭੀ ਦੇਖਾ ਹੈ ।

ਲਮਹੈ ਨੇ ਖਤਾ ਕੀ, ਔਰ ਸਦੀਯੋ ਨੇ ਸਜਾ ਪਾਈ ।

3. ISOLATED AND MIXED FAMILIES

I belong to the region of Sri Huzur Sahib, Nanded, where the Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was sent to help the *Nizam* of Hyderabad. We are popularly known as "Deccani Sikh", and rightly proud of upholding the values

of Sikhism for the last one and a half centuries in a such far off place from Punjab, and that too in a Muslim state. Previously it was isolated also, because of lack of communications in those days. Due to the circumstances and local language problem, we could not continue speaking Punjabi, but we stood unshaken in our beliefs by reading *Gurbani* in Gurmukhi script, maintaining the *Rahit*, compulsorily taking *amrit*, and marrying among the *amritdhari* only. We never had the practice of identifying with any sub-caste or *gotras*. Nobody uses any such suffixes with his name. In placing these facts before you, my intention is just to explain, how our ancestors were successful in remaining and maintaining the original form of Sikhism in those most adverse circumstances. Even after strictly preserving our separate identity, being *amritdhari* and *shasiradhari*, we were never isolated in the society. On the other hand, we always received respectable treatment from every nook and corner which continues today.

In the Punjab, we live in mixed family system. In other words, we can say that it has become customary to have marital relationship between Sikhs and Hindus. And the *Rahit*, i.e., code of conduct of Sikhism has been moulded and practised to meet our comforts, convenience and personal needs, so as to be acceptable, even for those non-believers, who do not have any faith in it, and do not stand for our separate identity. Here, we are committing a blunder. For by integrating the families, we are destroying and demolishing the basic structure of Sikhism, which was built up over 239 years by the ten Gurus.

ਇਸ ਬਾਗ ਕੇ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਕਰਨੇ ਕੇ, ਬਸ ਦੇਕ ਹੀ ਉਲੂ ਕਾਫੀ ਥਾ ।

ਹਰ ਸ਼ਾਖ ਪੇ ਉਲੂ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ, ਅੰਜਮ ਗੁਲਿਸਤਾਂ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਗਾ ।

I am not against this mixed family system, as it has very deep roots, and has become an inseparable part and parcel of our people for centuries. In this system, the problem should not be, how a Sikh has to choose one of the two, Family or Faith. In such circumstances, a Sikh should boldly draw a line to adhere and practise the tenets of Sikhism at any cost, and should not allow any other ideology to interfere, while keeping cordial relationship with the family members who profess any other religion. This theory is quite common among the people, who face such problems after an inter-caste marriage or conversion. They solve their problem by practising their own individual religion, and children are brought up and given the different religious teachings, according to their mutual consent or choice. Thus, many such families have two or more religious practices under one roof successfully.

4. OUR RELIGION

Our religion is generally defined and explained by people having

half or no knowledge about it, which instils either confusion or blind faith. The interesting aspect of our life is that whatever we require for our person or family, we acquire it by ourselves, but for religion, we depend on others. Unlike other religions, our scripture, i.e., Guru Granth Sahib, is less read and more respected by its followers. We hire professional readers and singers to read, recite, pray for us, and we just worship this matchless source of knowledge, wisdom and inspiration. Most of us do ceremonial recitation of *Nitnem* and complete it with jet speed. We regularly visit gurdwara also. It is similar to a boy, who goes to school, wears the uniform, attends the class, but does not learn anything from the teacher, and occasionally takes the lessons from the fellow students. Have we ever assessed what we have attained by such exercises and expenditures during the past several years? Unless we ourselves read and try to understand the text, which is simple but in different languages of the common man, in Gurmukhi script, how are we going to get the message? In this short time, I do not want to elaborate and deviate from the subject, and would like to restrict myself to a few quotations.

- ਜਿਨਿ ਚਾਖਿਆ, ਤਿਸੁ ਆਇਆ ਸਾਦੁ .।।
ਜਿਉ ਗੁੰਗਾ, ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ।। (ਮ. ੫, ਪੰਨਾ ੮੦੧)
- ਕਥਤਾ, ਬਕਤਾ, ਸੁਨਤਾ, ਸੋਈ ।
ਆਪੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ, ਸੁ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਹੋਈ । (ਮ. ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੫੨)
- ਮਨਮੁਖਿ, ਦੁਬਿਧਾ, ਸਦਾ ਹੋ ਰੋਗੀ.
ਰੋਗੀ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ।
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝਹਿ, ਰੋਗੁ ਗਵਾਵਹਿ ,
ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਵੀਚਾਰਾ । (ਮ. ੩, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੦)
- ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ, ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸਿਆ,
ਸੋ, ਸੁਨੁ ਹੋ ਭਾਈ ।
ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ਕੈ,
ਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਨਾਈ । (ਮ. ੯, ਪੰਨਾ ੭੨੭)

5. OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The process of learning by the human being can be described in four stages. Firstly, he sees, observes and then imitates the action. Secondly, by listening. Thirdly, by reading. And fourthly by thinking right or wrong, whatever he sees, listens or reads. Most of the youth are at the first stage, as far as religion is concerned. If we want to educate the youth, the teaching should start from our own living. The true concept of Sikhism is generally conveyed wrongly. The symbolic identification of a Sikh with Sikhism is not sufficient. He should be a knowledgeable believer in the philosophy of

Sikhism, so that he can never be misguided by any infiltration of an other ideology, which can weaken his belief or appearance. In my humble opinion, I would like to suggest five measures to eradicate the roots of the problem.

- i. Our attitude towards our religion should be reviewed. It should not be thought of as a method to wipe off sins or fulfil desires. This is contrary to the basic fundamentals of Sikhism. We should try to mould our life style according to the preachings of our Gurus.
- ii. To set an example, let us honestly try to inculcate the habit of following our religion in every respect and not compromise or downgrade its values and principles. Our outer appearance and inner faith should be guided by *Gurbani* and *Rahit*.
- iii. Gurmukhi script should be learnt, taught and used as much as possible, so that *Gurbani* could be well-read, preferably in Gurmukhi script alone, with correct pronunciations and punctuations. This will help us to understand the true spirit of the message, and also develop the interest and affection towards it.
- iv. Apart from the *Nitnem*, it is mandatory to read or hear daily some new passage or pages of *Gurbani* (*Rahit Maryada*) and understand the same. Those who cannot afford to do *prakash* of Guru Granth Sahib in their homes, can have its two volumes in *Sainchis* comfortably. To possess *Tika*, i.e., guide to understand the text, is also important for clarification of any doubts. Reading without understanding is a wasteful exercise, and moreover injurious, as it simply boosts the ego of having read it so many times.
- v. There should be a constant inflow of *Gurmat* literature in every house by way of books and magazines. Even though the members of our family do not touch it today, they will definitely study it tomorrow. This is like sowing the seeds of a crop for the harvesting season to come.

ਇਕਨਾ, ਸਿਧਿ ਨ ਭੁਧਿ, ਨ ਅਕਲਿ ਸਰ,

ਅਖਰ ਕਾ ਭੇਢੁ, ਨ ਲਹੰਤਿ ।

ਨਾਨਕ, ਤੇ ਨਰ, ਅਜਲਿ ਖਰ,

ਜਿ, ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ, ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤ ॥

(ਮ. ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੧੧)

APOSTASY AMONG SIKH YOUTH

Sardar Santokh Singh*

Religion is the most important institution of human society. This institution has developed with the evolution of human civilization. In the initial stages, man worshipped different gods out of fear. Later on, it was realised that there is a Supreme Power, which regulates the whole universe. Religion preaches self-imposed discipline for the betterment of society. Religion is based on altruism, whereas selfishness is the fountain-head of apostasy. Science emerged out of religion. In this age, no society can afford to divorce science. Spiritualism is not a physical object, hence not subject to scientific reasoning. Social, economic, political and cultural preachings by a religion will have to face logic and reasoning. Religions based on myths, superstitions, fatalism and blind faith have no future. Future belongs to the religions which have scientific explanation as a base and preach human brotherhood, peace and prosperity.

Industrial development and political policies concentrated wealth in a few hands and this has spread immorality and desire to become rich over-night, by hook or by crook. Consequently, apostasy has spread all over the world. Apostasy among Sikhs and particularly among Sikh youth is spreading at an alarming rate. Some causes are common with other religions such as modernity, T.V. and cinema and environment. There are some specific causes which pertain to Sikhism. For instance, opposition by Manuism, role of Sikh preachers, role of selfish Sikh politicians and Government policies. I may mention here that youth being raw-minded is more prone to apostasy. Apostasy among youth cannot be curbed without curbing it among elders.

MODERNITY

Sikhism is the latest and most scientific religion which caters to the requirements of a scientifically advanced society. A religion with egalitarian approach prohibits human exploitation and parasitical living, and motivates peace, constructive work and social welfare. It allows no room for superstitions and blind faith. Guru Nanak always convinced the masses by logic and reason. If education and modernity mean enlightenment of society, these cannot cause any apostasy among Sikhs. If modernity implies selfishness, cunningness and hypocrisy, then it is certainly causing apostasy among Sikhs.

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This type of apostasy can be curbed by preaching virtues, as illustrated in Sikh ideology, by persons who actually practise these virtues and not by oily-tongued political orators.

T.V. AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

T.V. and cinema are cheap means of entertainment manifesting low standard of human values. Mostly the persons in profession are dancers, clowns, dramatists and hypocrites. Liquor and other intoxicants are dearest to them. Since the dawn of civilization, their contribution remained contradictory to the ethics of the religion. Introduction of T.V. channels transmitting educational, religious and sports programmes can help to check such apostasy. Avoidance of these media is very useful for countering apostasy.

ENVIRONMENT

Man is a social creature. Interaction in society diffuses ideas, styles of living, cultures and religions. Youngsters are the most affected section of the society. A small section of society possesses the proper capability of thinking and analysing. Majority of the persons believe in imitation. In this age, faith and culture of minorities, if not properly insulated, is bound to deviate from the correct path. Best insulator for Sikhs would be to inculcate the superiority of their faith and ideology. This can be accomplished by altruistic intellectuals and preachers.

OPPOSITION BY MANUISM

Manuism is a system which has established caste segregation in India. It promises Brahminical hegemony and animal-like treatment to lower castes. Following this system, a major section of society was denied educational enlightenment, and was cunningly kept ignorant. A humanist faith (Buddhism) appeared on the Indian scene, which preached human brotherhood and refused to recognise Brahminical hegemony. This faith was wiped out of India by the use of brutal force by Brahmins. Lower sections of society were virtual slaves of the educated and powerful sections. Indian society as a whole became very weak. It was enslaved by a social set-up with progressive and better social understanding. Guru Nanak could not bear the agony of human exploitation by Indian elite and foreign invaders. After much cogitation and spiritual contact with the Creator, Guru Nanak concluded that Manuism was the major cause of human problems. He outrightly rejected it. His ideology is diametrically opposed to it. He propagated human brotherhood and establishment of an egalitarian society. Guru Nanak's ideology gave birth to a morally high, peace loving, prosperous and powerful society based on human equality and brotherhood. Since the inception of Guru Nanak's

ideology, Manuism is opposing it tooth and nail. Opposition is external as well as by infiltration. Petitions against Sikh ideology were made before Mughal king, who found no reason to interfere. Intrigues for physical elimination of Sikh Gurus were hatched and executed, which resulted in the martyrdom of fifth Nanak, besides four sons and mother of tenth Nanak. Pandit Kesho collaborated with Minas for bringing mythology in Guru Nanak's biography with the intention to reduce him to an *Avatar*. Scriptures of low caste *Bhagats* were excluded from Guru Granth Sahib to sabotage Sikh ideology and to proliferate casteism among Sikhs. Raja Ajmer Chand went to Deccan and painted a grim picture about the intentions of the tenth Nanak before Aurangzeb. This alarmed the Emperor. The fire ignited by Ajmer Chand against nascent Khalsa continued for the next six decades. Koer Singh *alias* Bishan Chand played havoc with Sikh ideology by inventing the myth of worship of Kali by the tenth Nanak on the eve of creation of the Khalsa. He admits that he was a Sikh only in name. Kesar Singh Chibber, a Brahmin, left no stone unturned to subvert the Sikh doctrine when he wrote *Bansavalinama* in the year 1769. He wanted to establish caste system among Sikhs and was not reconciled to find Jats (Sudras) on the top of Sikh political organisation. Sarup Dass Bhalla, in his *Mehma Prakash* written in 1776, pleaded for the rehabilitation of detractors of Sikh ideology. The infiltrators never appreciated Sikh gestures of goodwill. They were appointed on highest civil and military positions during Sikh political rule. They rewarded the Khalsa by turning traitors and handing over the empire to alien forces. Not satisfied with the destruction of the Khalsa Army, these deceptive elements misguided the young Sikh Prince to embrace an alien faith. These anti-Sikh elements persuaded Dr Trumpp to make caustic and derogatory remarks on Sikhs and to proclaim Sikhs as Hindus. Material provided by Dr Trumpp was used to attack Sikhism and castigate the Sikh Gurus. All efforts were made in the next three decades to swallow Sikhism. Pandit Sharda Ram Phillauri deserves special mention in this context. Manuwadi forces do not admit Sikhism as an independent religion and are making desperate efforts to engulf it by spreading apostasy among Sikhs. Only dedicated and altruistic scholars of the creed of Bhai Mani Singh can save the *Panth* from the clutches of these hypocrites having enormous political power and unlimited capacity for crafty manipulation. Nirankaris and Radha Swamis enjoy their full patronage.

ROLE OF SELFISH POLITICIANS

Sikhism is a principle-oriented faith. Personality is controlled by principle. Guru's word is Guru. Quantity without quality is immaterial. Truthful living is higher than truth. Selfish and power-hungry Sikh politicians follow *Chanakya Neeti* instead of *Dharm Neeti* (virtuous policy) taught and

practised by the Gurus. These fake Sikhs think that political achievements are not possible with the Guru's policy. They think that hypocrisy and sycophancy are essential for political achievements. They do not try to know how the Sikhs with meagre resources at their disposal dismantled the mighty Mughal Empire. High moral character played a major role for achieving their political objective. Their own powerful kingdom collapsed when they appointed *Chanakya* policy experts as their advisors. Khalsa is to follow the Guru. Guru was saint, soldier, scholar and always ready to sacrifice everything in the interest of humanity. The person who does not possess these qualities is not fit to become a leader of Sikhs. When leaders do not practise Sikh ideology in letter and spirit, they cause apostasy among Sikhs. This type of apostasy can be controlled by bringing the politicians under the command of religion as provided by Sikh tenets.

ROLE OF SAINTS AND PREACHERS

No person should be appointed preacher, *granthi* or saint without thorough knowledge of Sikh ideology, *Gurbani* and history. Preaching of myths amounts to preaching of apostasy. Preachers should not depend on unauthenticated books and must consult S.G.P.C. publications. Some saints and preachers indulge in ritualism out of ignorance or for the lust of money. This promotes apostasy. Gurdwara is a lighthouse of Sikh ideology and not a source of earning. Missionary-minded, intelligent, well-educated and well-versed with *Gurbani* and Sikh tenets devout Sikhs should be chosen to become preachers (*kathakar, ragi and granthi*). Fake saints spread apostasy under the garb of preaching *Gurbani*.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

It is loudly propagated that India is a secular state. The history of last 50 years reveals that secularism has been used to camouflage communalism. A book can be written on this subject, but I cite two instances :

- 1) Indian leaders promised to introduce Hindustani as *lingua franca* after attaining freedom. They got India partitioned on communal basis. More than two *lakh* innocent persons were killed and property worth billions of Rupees was destroyed during communal riots. After grabbing power, the same leaders introduced Sanskritized Hindi as *lingua franca* with the intention of promoting a particular religion and culture.
- 2) Due to incapability and selfishness of persons in power, the economic health of the country was deteriorating day by day. The promise of eradication of poverty, being impracticable under the prevailing economic conditions, was not fulfilled. Next elections were approaching nearer. A powerful opposition party was getting ready to bank upon the vote of

majority community by exploiting communal feelings. The person, who declared emergency to remain in power, hit upon a plan — to communalise the situation by remote control and then to convince the majority community that only she was their saviour. The plan was executed so precisely that even political opponents were made to believe that she was really their saviour. Remote control mechanism did not work properly and the situation went out of hand. Hundreds of innocent persons lost their lives. Thousands became orphans or widows. A few months before the elections, brutal force was used indiscriminately against the minority community. This deeply injured the religious feelings of the minority community. Two bodyguards of the Prime Minister could not bear the agony of their religious hurt and killed her at her official residence while on duty. Thousands of persons of minority community were killed and their property worth *crores* of Rupees was destroyed. Savage massacre continued for four long days. Government took no action. Consequently, *lakhs* of Sikhs turned apostates. There was an unprecedented electoral victory of the party claiming to be secular. The known communal party dreaming of coming to power could bag only two seats.

A Delhi Judge in his judgement dated 27-08-1996 has observed : "Those who engineered the riots and made the people their tools, are still at large. The equality before law required that all those who were involved in the conspiracy, those who helped in the conspiracy by their inaction should have been brought to book and made to face the trial". The Judge passed severe strictures on the then administration, the police and political masters, who allegedly supported the rioters, and pronounced them as real culprits. The Judge further observed : "The same standard of law should have been applied to unearth the criminal conspiracy of those mass murderers which were applied to Mrs Gandhi's murder case." The Judge also observed : "Lt. Governor, Police Commissioner and other officials acted under the guidance of their political masters and rendered the police force inactive to deal with the riots. The District Magistrate did not call the Army, which was his legal obligation and duty to suppress the riots. He was made inactive by political pressure".

Sikhism is the only major religion of the world which does not enjoy state protection. So, conscious Sikhs should take special interest to enlighten the *sangat* (Sikh masses). *Sangat* should be made conscious to check the apostasy. Our Guru has ordained four major religious sins. Out of these four sins, only one sin is apparent, three are latent. Latent apostasy deserves special attention. Camps in schools and colleges with the objective of enlightening the Sikh youth about their religion would really prove beneficial to curb apostasy.

APOSTASY — THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ms Nav Kiran Pal Kaur*

Apostasy — detachment from one's religion can be viewed synonymous to personal and social disorganisation within a particular community. Immediate consequences may be a lack of common belief, values, moral integrity and predictability. Influential people from that community realize it to be an intolerable, undesirable condition, and crucial need is felt for constructive and collectivistic reform. This often assumes the shape of social problem, because it has disruptive effects on social life. Because of the controversial nature of the issue, it may be approached from a sociological perspective. It captures religion as an institution having functional pre-requisite contribution towards social solidarity, value consensus and harmony.

According to Sapir, "Religion is man's never ceasing attempt to discover a road to spiritual serenity across the complexities and dangers to life." According to Yinger Milton, "Religion is the attempt to bring about relative temporary, painful things in life into relation with what is conceived to be permanent, absolute and cosmically optimistic." In the history of mankind, man has survived without science, but not without religion.

Ruth Benedict, an American sociologist, discussed patterns of culture Apollonian and Dionysian. Apollonian lays emphasis on moderation, sobriety and restraint providing an individual with insight and wisdom. Dionysian in contrast encourages desire to break the routine allowing emotional excess or recklessness. Ruth Benedict concludes : "Spirituality and virtue are two social values. They may well constitute the value of religion in man's history, just as the pearl constitutes the value of the oyster."

Those who detach themselves from religion might get enslaved to insatiable desires and passions, thus destroying themselves entirely. Pritim A. Sorokin writes in his four volumes book that the house of Western man will collapse, everything will contribute to its destruction, because man has become debased, sensual and materialistic. He does not believe in sacred and absolute.

What is Sacred ? Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology, defines sacred and profane precisely. He says that sacred brings

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an attitude of awe, respect and reverence for certain things, whereas profane refers to common place and utilitarian activities of life. According to Durkheimn, religion is an ultimate non-material social fact encompassing belief in sacred things, performance of religious rites and binding the individuals into a single moral community.

Apostates may get detached from religious community, moral restraints, common solid ideology and belief system. The feeling of collective sentiment may diminish leading towards more individualistic patterns of life. Individualistic patterns may cause egoism where consideration for others is totally lost. But morality as propagated by religion begins with disinterest, with attachment to something other than ourselves. The devastating implications of growing egoism in the shape of rising rate of suicides is well brought about by Durkheimn.

Apostasy, if it exists in Sikh youth today, has to be analysed from youth's perspective as well. Why the youth is going away from religion ? Can the new generation become a complete replica of the preceding one in character structure, cultural and tradition set up ? Religion will have to face practical difficulties of society, and particularly as faced by the youth.

Youth today has certain functional needs — needs that have not developed all of sudden, but rather are universal and global. They are living in the sensate environment where there is stress on maximum exploitation of the external world for the maximum satisfaction of needs. Family, institutions, religious experts, intellectuals and care takers of religion will have to explain to the youth the ideational aspects of social life. Stress should be given on minimization of carnal needs of individual. Religion is the only saviour of the insatiable and unreined desires.

Youth is aware of the fact that there are complexities in modern life. They are facing tough competitions, diverse value systems and new ideologies. Suicide rates are rising high, mental derangement is on the increase, and so is addiction. They will be convinced if the religion has got something to offer. They should be provided with expert counselling, job opportunities and maximum welfare services with complete dedication, instead of making gurdwaras. One must admit that the more religion adapts to the existing conditions and factual knowledge, the greater it has the chance of being effective as an institution.

Youth seeks logical explanation. So, if we want to associate youth with religion, we will have to create an environment in which reflexes, impulses and emotional tendencies of youth can be moulded. It will be a process of

adult socialisation, and the agents will have to be very sympathetic, patient and affectionate towards apostate youth to avoid any generational conflict. If unduly pressurised, they might withdraw altogether. Practising rituals or merely preaching dogmas would not bring desirable results. They will have to be logically and convincingly explained.

Economic frugality and prudence as underlined by Sikh ideology are the need of the hour. But the difficulty is that there exists a conflict and confusion of values. Even if the family teaches good values, other formal and secondary agencies may influence the youth with cheap and distorted values. There comes the strain — which values to adopt? So, the system including political institutions, media and others have influence on the mind of the youth. The system should be restructured so that there is uniformity of values and there remains no gap between theory and practice.

In the so-called secular societies of today there is, in fact, a trend towards Hinduisation and Christianisation. These religions have tremendous influence on the youth through educational institutions, films, etc. Political power, media and weaknesses of Sikh institutions have failed to make the youth realise that Sikhism is not based on mythology and that even if we exclude myths or *sakhis*, Sikhism has long historical factual base where altruism and sacrifices guide the path of righteousness and dedication to cause. But youth today has irrelevant burdens like fashion, false display and tendency for easy means to life provided by the present environment. This demands serious steps like our own Sikh media and knowledge of Sikh history.

Attracting an apostate towards religion is a long integrated process, supported by all primary and secondary institutions. Family, mates, institutions all need to extend the support. Individual should be willing. Foremost step is conceptualisation of religion. Those detached should be made aware of what religion and religiousness means. The clear and distinct view of Sikhism should be presented and not mixed with other religions. It has five interrelated dimensions :

1. Belief Dimension : Degree to which one starts taking hold of religious belief.
2. Practice Dimension : How often one engages into religious experience, follows the routine and practises it. Without devotion, there would be an absolute deviation.
3. Knowledge : Most important thing is one's inclination towards acquiring knowledge about religion, desire to know more and more. Then only does one develop an understanding and commitment to the ideology.

4. **Consequence :** Religious ideology would affect one's day to day activities. One learns self-discipline as a condition for moral health. One accepts the religious ideology henceforth with enlightened assent, and understands that rules prescribed are essential and reasonable conditions for harmonious functioning in society.
5. **Final Stage :** Individual develops devoted, obligatory sense of duty towards religion. He finds religion an imperative, and fulfils all his duties with great delight. Enduring confidence in religion makes him more humane.

There is a limit to which secularisation can go. It does not always provide social order and protection. Howard Becker writes that extreme type of secular society is apt to be highly unstable. It is possible for sacred or religious society to emerge from extreme type of secular society. David Martin says that the concept of secularisation includes a large number of discrete elements loosely put together. He advocates its removal from social vocabulary. In relative terms, in sacred or religious society, the relationships are natural, unchallengeable and absolute. So let us be a part of our sacred society.

Max Weber, while analysing almost all religions of the world, said that caste system in India erected overwhelming barriers to social mobility and regulated even the minutest aspects of people's lives. He believes this to be the reason India could not produce a rationally ordered society and remained backward.

If Sikh youth studies religion thoroughly, it would conclude logically that Sikh faith never forbids mobility. It is a faith where conformity does not push one to the point where it completely subjugates the intellect. Rather, it encourages enhancement of intellect, courage and rational attitude. We should be optimistic that the Sikh youth today is responsible, cautious and will have an open view of its religion.

HUMAN HAIR — A BIOLOGICAL NECESSITY

Dr Birendra Kaur*

Hair is a characteristic feature of mammals, which are commonly known as "Hairy quadrupeds" — a group of animals that mark the climax of evolution. Also mammals are the dominant animals in the world today, due partly to their ability to regulate body temperature in the face of variations in environmental temperature. This requires regulation of heat production and heat loss by the body. Hair plays an important role in regulating the latter. Impulses from the brain (hypothalamus) cause the hair to stand on ends, thereby enclosing an insulating layer of air just outside the skin. This layer reduces the loss of heat by radiation.

Even among mammals, man marks the climax of evolution and possesses the most complex and highly developed brain as well as the longest hair on head. This feature cannot be without significance. It cannot be a matter of mere chance or a mistake by nature, because if the tail has been lost, the hair could have been lost too. On the contrary, human hair on the head region has increased manifold as compared to other mammals.

This dense and long growth of hair on the head region shows that the body is trying to increase the surface area for some particular function. Such a trend to increase the surface area is seen in every system of the body, e.g., highly coiled intestines with finger-like villi on their inner surfaces for absorption of digested food; alveoli in the lungs for exchange of O_2 and CO_2 ; glomerular capillaries in the form of a bunch, and coiled tubules in the kidneys where urine filtration takes place. The circulatory and nervous systems show extensive branching to reach every nook and corner of the body. Even the surface of the human brain has maximum fissures (folds) corresponding to its increased mental abilities. The results that will be produced by decreasing the surface area at these points is easy for all to imagine !

FUNCTIONS OF HAIR

Hair perform a variety of functions. Some of these are listed below:

- Trap an insulating layer of still air just outside the skin, and thereby reduce loss of heat by radiation.
- Absorb harmful radiations from the sun.

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- Keep out coarse dust particles, e.g., eyelashes, hair in the nostrils and external auditory canals.
- Eyebrows prevent water or sweat from falling into eyes, due to their location and particular direction.
- Axillary and pubic hair lessen friction between limbs and body, and between limbs, respectively, during locomotion.
- Axillary hair provide larger surface area for evaporation of sweat.
- Beautify the body (otherwise why do people not shave off all the hair from the head completely? Bald men are desperate, and would pay any price to get hair back on their heads).
- Beard and moustache are for differentiation of sex. Mostly males are decorated in nature, e.g., lion, peacock and other birds, deer, etc.
- Hair follicles can make androgenic hormones.
- Prevent water from entering onto skin.
- Impart colour to body.
- Vibrissae are sensory hair, tactile in nature and useful in dark burrows.
- Defend the body in danger, by standing on their ends, thereby making the body look bigger.
- Flick off insects, when present at the end of tails.
- Help to disguise by blending with the colour of the surroundings, to escape the watchful eyes of natural enemies.

IS HAIR LIFELESS ?

Hair is erroneously considered lifeless because of lack of any visible connection with the brain. But, the brain is not controlling/communicating with our body through nerves alone. Hormones, which are chemical mediators, also regulate various body functions. The immune system of the body fights infections with the help of co-ordinated action of cells, which have no visible connection with each other or with the brain. So, presence or absence of nerves alone cannot determine the connection of a particular part of the body with the brain. If hair was really dead to the brain, how does it come to know that it has been cut, and responds by growing it to a specific length again. Once the specific length has been attained, further growth ceases. Thus, undoubtedly the brain is well aware of the condition of hair, cut or uncut, even upto its tip ! This is a sure sign of life. Thus, by cutting our hair, we are actually putting extra load on our body, as the energy and the raw materials (protein, etc.) required for growing hair time and again would be

manifold as compared to the amount required for their maintenance only. Further, the hair, like any other living organ of the body, responds to ageing — in its variations in length, denseness of growth, and greying. The condition of the health of a person is also reflected in the hair — in its lustre, shine, etc.

Lack of sensation in hair along its shaft (visible part of hair) is no indication of it lacking in life, for, even the brain shows no such sensation. There is a group of animals (phylum Porifera), which do not possess a nervous system at all. A blow to any part of their body produces no response whatsoever. Do we call these animals lifeless? Similarly, most plants do not show any sensation either.

Further, a part that we call 'lifeless' may be without sensation, but definitely not without function. Rather, its function is as important as any living part of the body, if not more. For example :

- What would be the fate of an egg without the shell?
- What would be the condition of the body's living cells without the covering of the dead cells, i.e., upper layers of skin.
- How can teeth perform their function without enamel?
- What life would a bird lead without feathers?
- How would many freshwater animals overcome unfavourable conditions and not become extinct without cysts?
- How would majority of plants survive and propagate as a species without formation of special devices meant for dispersal of seeds?

Actually, different parts of the body or different cells cannot be categorised as useful/not useful. Each is only specially modified to perform different function(s) for the benefit of the same individual. What the cells of a kidney can do, the cells of pancreas cannot. That does not mean that the former are more important than the latter or vice versa.

HAIR VS NAILS

It is often argued that hair and nails are similar, and a question frequently asked: "If we should not cut our hair, then why do we cut our nails?" But even a superficial study of the two shows them to be extremely different from each other. Whereas the hair grows from a tubular pit (hair follicle), formed by sinking in of the most actively dividing layer of the skin (stratum germinativum) into the lower dermis, the nails are only modifications of the upper dead layers of the skin (stratum corneum). Further, the base of every follicle bulges out forming an inverted cup, which receives blood capillaries for nourishment and nerve fibres to make the hair sensitive. An

oil gland, known as sebaceous gland, opens into every hair follicle, the secretion of which lubricates the hair. A muscle is also attached to the base of every hair for bringing about movement. Pigments are added to the shaft of the hair as it grows. None of these features is associated with nails.

Structurally also, hair is extremely strong, and resists breaking due to its elasticity and flexibility. Hair is as strong as steel, if we compare the two of the same diameter. Nails, on the other hand, are very brittle and rigid, breaking off easily. Hair are countless (upto 1,20,000 on head region alone), thereby increasing the surface area, as if to meet a specific requirement. Nails number only twenty in an individual.

The differences between the two do not end with the structural features. Even the body's response towards the two is totally different. Our body, throughout life, tries to maintain a particular length of hair. And if the hair is cut anywhere, the body responds by growing it again to the specific length. It clearly indicates the link of the body with the hair all along its length. The body shows no such response to the nails, which grow from birth to death at the same rate, irrespective of whether cut or not. It follows, thus, that cutting of nails does not tell on the body at all, whereas, as mentioned earlier, cutting of hair means extra load on the body.

Practically also, hair does not interfere in any daily activity, whereas it is impossible to work well with long nails. And even if not cut, nails generally fall off of their own; rather it takes great effort to maintain them, even upto a short length.

In contrast to the long list of the functions of hair, only one function can be attributed to nails — protection of the tips of digits, and that too is limited to the part in contact with skin. On the other hand, hair carries out the majority of its functions while its shaft has no contact with the skin.

To sum up, if there is anything on the head that can be compared with nails, it is dandruff!

It is also argued that hair has been lost from the body in man, because the body is kept covered. If that be the case, then, instead of being retained, the axillary and the pubic hair should have been the first to go. Also, the hair on the face, neck and hands should have remained.

Nature knows best what to discard or retain. Whatever is retained is not without purpose. If we are unable to explain something, it does not mean it has no significance. We must look for an explanation, rather than deny the role or existence of something we do not see.

There are sound frequencies we do not hear; light waves, that make

everything visible, we do not see; odours that we do not smell; there are animals that do not see as many colours as we do; some things we can neither see nor deny, such as emotions, bond between mother and child, force of gravity, etc. So, if there are things we do not see, hear, or smell, does it imply their absence ? Just as an ant cannot comprehend the size and shape of an elephant, life and its processes are beyond human comprehension in the present state of knowledge. Our vast solar system, which is beyond reach even today, is just a speck in the universe ! Even our smallness is beyond our comprehension.

Hair is a gift from God, not a burden. Guru Gobind Singh, in his infinite wisdom, commanded us to respect it and to refrain from tampering with it. This is the visible token of his affection for us, as well as our faith in him. If we have faith in our Guru, who was in communion with God, how can we do anything, but follow his advice and leave our hair uncut ?

Puran Singh saw this. Let us sing in gratitude *The Song of the Sikh* :

"Ah! Well, let my hair grow long;

.....

I cannot forget the knot He tied on my head;

It is sacred, it is his mark of remembrance.

The Master has bathed me in the light of suns not yet seen;

There is eternity hound in this tender fragile knot.

I touch the sky when I touch my hair, and a thousand stars
twinkle through the night.

.....

Who says the hair is no more than grass?

Yet a single hair is a dear remembrance, an heirloom, a trust,
a pledge, a love, a vow, an inspiration.

My form is but a statue of dumb gratitude for the knot
of Friendship tied by those Kings of Eternity,
the Gurus who came to the Punjab;

The Saviours who were gracious to love me and made me
a home in the Realm of Eternal Beauty."

DO WE NEED FACIAL HAIR ?*

Dr Birendra Kaur

Anthony Clavane poses this question in his article under the same title in the columns of the *Times of India*. And the 'evidence' produced and the 'arguments' advanced by him in the body of his article, leave no doubt about what the answer of an unwary reader should be. The first thing that catches one's attention is the caricature of a face with a long beard, overgrown protruding teeth, a nose tilted flat to one side, and eyes almost missing. The obvious suggestion is that a beard is not only itself ugly, but also leads to extra large size of teeth, deformity of nose and loss of eyes ! In all fairness, it must be acknowledged that he has not concealed his bias. However, to be able to endorse such a preposterous assumption, one would certainly need an extraordinary degree of ignorance.

But the author does not depend upon his artistic skill alone. He has furnished 'evidence', although it is more from history or annals of fun, than from any scientific study. He quotes "1907 experiment in which two men kissed a young woman after walking through Paris". The incident is indeed interesting and makes his article readable. But it is difficult to call it an experiment, since it is lacking in practically every requirement of a scientific trial. There are no replications, and hence no data which could be subjected to statistical treatment. There is no information on the personal hygiene of the two main actors in the drama. Who was conducting the 'experiment' ? And with what purpose ? Did he not know that no valid conclusion can be drawn on the basis of a single trial ? And so on.

Anyway, let us have a look at his conclusions. "Harmless yeast germs were found in the clean-shaven man's solution, whereas the bearded man's swarmed with malignant microbes". This is indeed very interesting. The two men walked the same street of the same city. It is natural to expect that they would catch more or less of both types — the harmless yeast germs and the malignant microbes. The author is suggesting, however, that the malignant microbes can distinguish between a bearded man and a clean-shaven man in order to swarm to the former, carefully avoiding the latter. If the malignant bacteria swarmed the beard of the bearded man, where do you think they

* In reply to the article "Do we need facial hair ?" *Times of India*, The Sunday Review, October 20, 1996. (Reproduced after this article.)

swarmed more in the case of the clean-shaven man? If another test would be done to compare the alveoli of the lungs of the two men, the answer would be clear. For, these would be found in the lungs of the clean-shaven man, who had no beard to entrap them. This test was done in 1907, imagine if a similar one was done today ! Hail the beard ! — it traps malignant bacteria from entering the lungs. Is it being suggested to remove the strainer for pouring tea, because it collects all the tea leaves ? Although the beard is not originally meant for this purpose, men can, in fact, benefit from it in the present day polluted environment.

While the structure of hair is such that it can trap bacteria, it does not provide any congenial or favourable conditions for their growth and multiplication. On the other hand, shaven skin is one of the best substrata for their survival and multiplication. Shaving, which would have to be repeated at least once everyday, would invariably result in cuts, some of which would be microscopic — and that is all the malignant bacteria and dreaded viruses need to swarm to the interior of our bodies. (Or may be the microbes can distinguish between the cuts inflicted by shaving from other types of cuts !) A shaven face is rather unhygienic. In fact, it should not be called 'clean-shaven', but 'unclean-shaven'. We all know how important it is to maintain an intact skin in modern times, when fear of AIDS, hepatitis-B, etc., is writ large on the face of mankind.

If hair are really posing such a problem, we will have to train ourselves to shave off eyelashes, eyebrows, hair in the nostrils and ear canals, which otherwise have a definite protective role, but must also inevitably be swarmed by malignant microbes, following the results of the Paris experiment.

A normal man has about 25,000 hairs on his face and each of them grows roughly 1/100th of an inch every 24 hours — so that altogether a shaven man removes 250 inches (or nearly 21 feet) of hair every time he shaves. Imagine the enormous extra load he puts on his body in terms of energy and raw materials (proteins, etc.) required to grow the beard time and again.

There is one solution to the problem by which we can retain all other hair on the body and lose only the beard and moustache — and that too from the roots, and for all times to come ! And that is — to stop the testis from producing the male hormone, testosterone. How do you like that ? The only casualty of this would be the other male secondary sexual characters ! These are only the unwanted deepening of voice, broadening of shoulders, growth and distribution of hair on body, enlarged and stronger skeletal muscles, development of accessory sex glands such as prostate and seminal vesicles, and sexual behaviour and the sex urge ! But look what you have achieved —

only the harmless yeast bacteria will come near you ! What a relief !

Since beard is an organ of the body, it is most ridiculous to place smoking and the keeping of beard together as habits. An addiction of the body cannot be compared with an organ of the body. Then there should be no need to mention other organs of the body other than the beard, which are more 'smelly' and more of 'a danger to public health'. It is not any particular organ, but the hygienic standard that an individual maintains, which determines how much of a health hazard he is to the society. The whole body needs cleansing regularly. We also wear clothes, which must harbour bacteria with time. Do we stop wearing them for that reason ? Why do not Ross Perots, Walt Disneys and Margaret Thatchers further prefer naked underlings to dressed ones ?

It is a fact that men who maintain beard are a minority (not 'oppressed', though), and may be 86% of women disapprove of beards, and that smooth chops are preferred as political candidates, but has it ever been proven that what the majority does, thinks or feels, is right ? Consider Socrates, Pluto, Aristotle, Herodotus, Count Leo Tolstoy, Rabindra Nath Tagore, William Shakespeare, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, George Bernard Shaw, W.G. Gracc, Acharya Rajneesh and many other great men sporting charming beards, who belonged to this minority. Were they 'obsessive', 'psychopathic' or 'impotent' ? Did they have some other sexual problems, prescribed by Parker ? Nobody, not even a 100% of people, can deny or challenge the accuracy, meaningfulness and wisdom of nature's decisions. And there are women who find bearded men extremely handsome, and think that men without beard are not men ! And also that shaven men look like dressed chickens or eunuchs ! However, the fact remains that the location and growth of hair on the human body is a decision of nature, and is not subject to an opinion poll amongst an ignorant population.

Great visionary artists like Michaelangelo and William Blake have depicted God with full flowing beard. To William Shakespeare, a beardless man was "barefaced", which according to Oxford Dictionary means shameless and impudent. According to *The World Encyclopaedia* : "Egyptian kings and queens both sometimes wore a false beard as a symbol of royalty." *The Book of Knowledge* states : "The thought of beards generally brings to mind learned professors, artists, or perhaps Father Christmas ...At one time lack of hair on a man's face showed his lowliness; the Turks, for example, used to shave their slaves to distinguish them from more important persons. To have one's beard cut off in those days was considered a terrible disgrace. A criminal was sometimes punished in this way, and people would know that he had committed some offence until he had managed to grow his beard again." About

the spiritual symbolism of the beard, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* states : "The bearded races of mankind have commonly held the beard in high honour. It is the sign of full manhood... the deities and prophets of many faiths have been traditionally pictured with beards, as were kings and nobles and dignitaries.... In India and Turkey, the beard was allowed to grow as a symbol of dignity and wisdom... among Turks, slaves were shaved as a mark of servility." Even today some bosses prefer clean-shaven underlings, as admitted by Anthony Clavane himself.

Nature has decorated the male human being, as it has done many other species (lion, peacock and other birds, deer, etc.). And further, the beard and moustache have not been 'retained', but endowed on man, as no other animal has this type of decoration. It is one of the many gifts of nature to man, who, owing to these gifts, is the most evolved and intelligent species of animals today. Does a tree look better, when cut to a shape ? Will a lion or a peacock look better after having been to a barber ? Are these animals and many others suffering from 'sexual insecurity', 'sexual anxiety' or some 'apalling personality defect' ?

A psychological problem can only be associated with those who shave or style their beards, rather than with those who maintain them. To wear the beard in its natural form is the only natural, normal and logical thing to do. Having a beard is not being aggressive. In fact, it is a sign of living in harmony with nature. On the other hand, it is shaving (with sharp instruments) which is an act of aggression on nature ! And such attacks are done in the erroneous belief that it beautifies man. How can we improve on God's creation? Can we paint the lily better ? If God wanted man without a beard, He could easily have created him as such (for example, has He not created him without a tail ?). A man who shaves is an apostate violating God's order, refusing His gift.

Actually, shaving of the beard is a wrong approach to the actual problem. What would be Anthony Clavane's next suggestion ? Remove the lungs ? The real problem is pollution, which needs to be tackled. If the Taj Mahal or the buildings of London city are in the danger of being ruined with pollutants in the air, is it a solution to bring down these magnificent structures ? Will it solve the problem in any way ? Man has first polluted the environment by tampering with nature, and now, will tampering of the natural human form solve any problems ? Grave problems that man faces today, such as acid rains, cancers, ozone depletion, greenhouse effect, etc., are all results of interfering with nature. If only man would acknowledge his short-sightedness, so many problems would not arise. In view of short-term profits,

deforestation started, and only then did we realise the importance of trees — when it was too late ! It is sad that inspite of so many obvious results of tampering with nature, man has not learnt any lessons ! Man calls himself wise (*Homo sapiens*), but when will wisdom dawn on mankind ! The farther we are moving from nature, the closer we are getting to our own END.

As mentioned earlier, human hair or beard is an organ of the body, and discussion of this subject legitimately belongs to the discipline of biology. The author has drawn support from the like of Margaret Thatcher, Ross Perot, Walt Disney and Tupper. One may ask what are their credentials as biologists ? And what are the author's own in pleading the barber's cause ?

The author also beneficently advocates 'a little social engineering' to change human behaviour, and would like to entrust this responsibility to Edith Sessions Tupper, who gave the verdict, 90 years ago : "If the 20th century should remove whiskers from the face of man, it will be glory enough for 100 years". God, save the society from such 'social engineers' who see nothing else (beyond beard or nose) for glory of mankind over a full century !

Do we need facial hair ?

Beards are ugly, unsanitary and serious health hazards, says ANTHONY CLAVANE. Think of all the pollutants trapped in that hair.

Sometimes, a little social engineering would not go amiss. Policies designed to change human behaviour tend to be frowned upon in the free world : compulsory seat-belts and smoking bans are all very well but the line is firmly drawn at laws prohibiting the cultivation of facial hair. This seems to me to be a great shame.

Isolated 20th-century figures such as Margaret Thatcher, Ross Perot and Walt Disney have all insisted that their underlings be clean and untickled. They are part of a noble pogonophobic tradition dating back to early Christian times, when clean-shaven Romans guarded Western civilisation against shaggy savages.

All evidence suggests that beards are unsanitary. Consider the 1907 experiment in which two men kissed a young woman after walking through Paris. A sterilised brush was passed over her lips and dipped into a sterile solution of agar and sugar. Harmless yeast germs were found in the clean-shaven man's solution, whereas the bearded man's swarmed with malignant microbes.

In 1985, a Soviet scientist discovered that beards caused a build-up of unhealthy substances which were then reinhaled. They were especially dangerous, he surmised, if worn by smokers.

According to Chinese scientists, chemical pollutants are trapped in the hair : "Those with both moustaches and beards may breathe as much as 6.1 units (at least 4 units more than the clean-shaven)," reports an official newspaper. "Beards violate the requirements of hygiene and are not desirable."

Some 90 years ago, Edith Sessions Tupper arrived at the same verdict. In the *Chicago Chronicle*, she denounced them as "harbours of dirt and disease. If the 20th century should remove whiskers from the face of mankind, it will be glory enough for 100 years."

Civil libertarians bristle at the thought of pubs, restaurants, shops and workplaces, never mind governments, forbidding facial fuzz. Yet, like cigarette smoke, the beard is both smelly — emitting a range of odours from its owners' eating, drinking and, er, sexual habits — and a danger to public health. Even pogonophiles place the two vile habits in the same category : as the apologist *Guinness Book of Beards and Moustaches* says : "Men who wear beards in modern times are as much an oppressed minority group as smokers."

According to a 1993 Gallup poll, 86 per cent of women disapprove of thatches, and American researchers have discovered that political candidates with smooth chops have five per cent advantage over hairy opponents.

In 1969, N. Parker, an Australian psychiatrist, argued : Gentlemen who wear moustaches are generally obsessive, psychopathic, impotent or have some other sexual problem. Parker was lambasted at the time for such barefaced cheek, especially by those who consider facial hair to be a sign of male virility. But according to Darwin's theory of evolution, man retained it as a means of display to threaten rivals : so a beard or aggressive moustache may be a sign of sexual insecurity.

A bristling jawline arouses suspicions of a cover-up, whether it be sexual anxiety, a weak chin or some appalling personality defect. Smooth jawlines, on the other hand, are synonymous with vibrancy.

KESH INDISPENSABLE SYMBOL OF SIKH IDENTITY -

Prof. Sher Singh Sher*

Zoologically speaking, Man is an animal in animal kingdom, a mammal amongst animals according to taxonomy and the *Homo sapiens* amongst the mammals. The term *Homo sapiens* means "Man the Wise". Why ? Because he is a rational being. And who is rational ? The one who thinks. Who does do it ? Man; the word in medieval English and Anglo-saxon, is 'mann' akin to German 'mann', Goth 'manna', etc., probably in its Indo-European base 'man' to think, associated or cognate with Latin 'mens', i.e., mind. Hence, its basic sense is, "the one that thinks". In our own language, the word '*maanas*' is derived from man (mind), the faculty of thinking and reasoning.

The zoologist studies the animals of all species, kinds and types, but it is anthropology, which exclusively studies man, and amongst all sciences it is anthropology, which means, "The science or study of Man". Hence, properly speaking, the study of man is the domain of anthropologists and the divisions and subdivisions of different sciences put forth their respective claims of distinction as separate disciplines. Still, everything that is studied about man, comes within the embrace and the umbrella of anthropology.

Anthropology studies man right from his evolutionary origin to all aspects of life from his hoary past to his present. We are living in the bloom of science age and so I deeply felt to scientifically deal with the topic in hand. Mainly, the physical anthropology studies man in his living condition and dead condition. In the first case, the study is termed as somatology and in the second case, it is called osteology — the study of bones. In somatology, the characters are observed, measured and analysed serologically. I am concerned with the 'Human Hair', which comes under observational methods called somato-scopic, that which is seen even with the naked eye.

Hair is one of the outward characters, along with skin and eye, which have been the determining traits to classify or typify different branches or groups of *Homo sapiens*.

The paper is especially aimed at enlightening the people, who cut or destroy hair or even change and distort their pigmentation, ignorantly think-

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ing of them as useless, thus depriving themselves of this invaluable gift of nature and becoming apostates in the eyes and sanctity of Sikh religion.

There is no animal other than man who thinks about his origin, development, past, present and future, and uses both reason and imagination. So he has also been thinking about his own body, its natural characters, respective functions of its parts, adaptation to his needs, environment, climate and consequent variations. So is his case with his hair, which decreased from his anthropoid or ape-stage to his human position.

Functionally, the hair are of three types — protective, tactile like sensory organs, and excretory, which excrete a substance which oils them to make them smooth and shiny. The hair are grown on the body of the foetus and cover it just in the form of a woolly layer, but this layer is shed a few weeks before birth and is replaced by new growth. This layer is called *lanugo*. All the human fetuses are born with a good growth of hair on head, on which man has the maximum amount of hair throughout his life, except when he reaches senility and hair are shed, and in most cases partly or complete baldness takes place.

The different human populations have different types of hair in forms and patterns. The hair are more on the body of some racial groups and less on some ethnic groups, in which genes or heredity and environs both play their role.

The hairs grow in armpits and pubes on attaining puberty, and so also grow at this stage on lips and cheeks in males, called moustaches and beard, respectively. The hair on head are the longest on human body. The Mongoloid people do not have much quantity of hair on their faces and on rest of the body, whereas the Ainu of Japan are the most hairy people in the world. The hair on the head have been protecting man from inclemencies of weather and climate; cold, heat and rain — besides protecting him from injuries. The Caucasoid group, to which we belong, have straight and wavy hair — having abundant growth on the regions of the body where they naturally grow. The apocrine and eccrine glands regulate body temperature through hair. That is why the hairs are called temperature regulators.

Nature has not produced anything blindly and purposelessly, and everything natural has some utility. The *lanugo* on almost whole body does an immeasurable good to body, but the hairs on other parts of body do not lag behind in their beneficial contribution — the hair in armpits absorb sweat and act as cushion to reduce friction of skin while walking, the hair in nose prevent entry of dust and other atmospheric floating particles harmful for lungs. The hair on eyebrows act in the same manner, and so do eye-lashes.

The pubic hairs provide cushion to save skin from injury due to friction during sex act. They grow on man's pubes in the pattern of a triangle, but on those of a woman in the form of an inverted triangle.

The hair of the head are considered from different traits : colour, form, texture, quantity, whorl, cross-section, etc. In colour, the hair may be blond, intermediate, brown, black or red. In form, the hair of the head is mostly classified as : (1) Leiotrichous or straight-haired — a) stretched or straight, thick, coarse and stiff, b) smooth or sleek, thin and soft. (2) Cymotrichous or wavy-haired — a) broad wavy, the waves are broad and lie in one plane, b) narrow wavy; short, strongly curved, the waves lying in the same plane, c) curly, the waves are deep, having large spirals not lying in the same plane. (3) Ulotrichous or woolly-haired — a) frizzly or kinky, having short deep waves, but do not form a complete spiral, b) widely knit, c) closely knit, d) filfil, the so-called peppercorn hair, which are heavily rolled, and e) spiral hair texture is of three grades; coarse, medium and fine. The quantity of hair may be scanty or thin, medium, thick or rich. A whorl on the occiput of the head may be seen which may be directed clockwise or anti-clockwise. There may be single (one), double (two) or multiple whorls. The clockwise whorl is designated as plus and anti-clockwise whorl as minus. The hair cross-section may be circular, oval or elongated. The density of beard and moustaches may be observed, and may be scarce, medium or thick. The two eyebrows may be connected at the midpoint or separated. So far as quantity is concerned, they may be scanty, medium or bushy and thick.

The space and the size of this paper being limited, I cannot describe all the traits and aspects in detail, connecting them with different physical, morphological or somatic types of Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid — three major anthropological divisions of mankind, but still some interesting things about hair will be appropriate to tell here.

The shedding of hair goes on in life before senility and simultaneously the process of their replacement goes on. On an average three years is the life of a human hair. It is a universal phenomenon that women become bald in far fewer numbers than men. There is much literature proving that growth of hair increases in women during pregnancy. Generally, hair is shed due to diseases — fevers, myxoderma, sudden shock, fear, syphilis, tuberculosis and nervous illness. The eunuchs do not become bald. In exceptional cases the length of the hair of head is simply astonishing as professor C.F. Danforth mentions in his book, *Hair With a Special Reference to Hypertrichosis*, that an Indian *Sadhu* had 36 feet long hair on his head. The human hair is very strong and elastic, comparable only with Indian rubber. An average natural hair can

bear the weight of seven ounces before it breaks. If a rope is woven with all the hairs of the head of man, it can support the weight of a thousand kilograms. *The Caravan*, published from New Delhi, carried a very interesting article on human hair in its issue of 15th January, 1955. It stated, "Among the most wonderful sights in the world are the giant hair ropes which have lain outside Kyoto's Higashi Henganji shrine in Japan for well over eighty years. The largest of these ropes is 269 feet in length, 1.3 feet in circumference and 2,234 pounds in weight. The ropes were woven in 1880 when the construction of two chief buildings for the famous shrine was begun. Ropes were needed to hoist the heavy keyaki beams, and many pious women throughout the country willingly cut off their tresses, which were woven into these enormous ropes, as no other kind of rope was strong enough to hoist these massive beams and haul heavy stones.

Some people can perform remarkable feats with their hair. One such Samson is Dault Ravji Gaikwad, a forty-two year old employec of the Maharashtra State Road Corporation. His ten years old son Datta has inherited his father's hair power and they have given demonstrations throughout the state of Maharashtra. Their repertoire includes such hair-raising feats as pulling a bus with fifty passengers by the hair.

Dr Chanda Singh has devoted many years to research on human hair. He writes on page three of his pamphlet *Human Hair*, "If a human hair is placed on a bar of steel and passed through a cold rolling mill, its imprint will be visible on the steel, which shows that human hair is harder than steel".

Man has struck a difference from the hair direction of his ancestors — in antropoids, and one of them is that the hair on the back of man converge on the midline, whereas those of the anthropoid diverge. Some evolutionists and anthropo-geographers believe that the denudation of hair occurs due to migration and effects of climate. It has been recorded that the original man's hairiness did not drift in quantity from his ape-ancestors as it does today due to decrease, though of course his head has more hair. As on head, man had 880 hair per square centimeter, whereas, orangutan, chimpanzee and gibbon had 383, 400 and 546, and on back man had 696, whereas the above mentioned animals had 937, 422 and 440 respectively. At any rate man's bodily hair decreased in quantity as he drifted away from his original natural life and began to protect himself with artificial means, but even then his head retained the maximum quantity and length of hair, which in general tautological term are called *kesh*, though *kesh* means the hair of any part of human body. So, even nature has preserved the growth of hair on head to protect it as it contains the most delicate and complicated nervous system. Doubtlessly, man has lost

his original quantity of hair, yet Darwin writes in his renowned work, *The Descent of Man*, "The loss of hairy covering is a loss to man". It is a salient point to notice that the human animal is born having hairless palms and soles, which continue their nakedness throughout life. They may be soft as silk but protectively they may be strong and stiff and in certain animals they are graded in the descending order — as spines, bristles, awns, wool, fur, down. The sharp and rather natural weapons as spines are seen in porcupine and hedgehog. The hairs also convey symptoms or signals in condition of beligerent mood or fear by "standing on end".

It is not possible here to occupy an enormous space to actually quote the words of numerous scientists, who have worked and opined about different aspects of human hair, and so for inquisitive readers, here I only mention their names with due reference to their respective writings — Coon,¹ Gran,² Janusch,³ R.A.S.A.,⁴ Sarkar,⁵ Elliot,⁶ Boas,⁷ Weiner,⁸ Hulse,⁹ Hutchinson-Gregory-Lydekker¹⁰ (All three together), Yerks,¹¹ Katherine,¹² Hammerton,¹³ Morris,¹⁴ Swanton,¹⁵ Kroeber,¹⁶ Topinard,¹⁷ Hooton,¹⁸ Baur-Fischer-Leny¹⁹ (All three together), Hrdlika,²⁰ Howells,²¹ Haeckle,²² Romer,²³ Tylor,²⁴ Barnett,²⁵ Frazer,²⁶ Kephart,²⁷ Stern,²⁸ Taylor,²⁹ Haddon,³⁰ Keith,³¹ Sullivan³² and Skeat.³³

On the basis of a vast study of evolution, I offer here a definition of man. "Man is a biped, erect, walking, thinking, reasoning, speaking, tool-making, tool-using, worshipping and praying animal". In this paper, I am basically concerned with the last two traits of man — worship and prayer; who is to be worshipped and who is to be prayed to? Some super-natural power beyond his control of whom he is afraid due to his helplessness before that all-powerful power-omnipotent, omniscient and omniscient, to which he can call by any word, term, designation or name, and there are countless names of that power which is called God, *Allah*, *Paramatma*, *Rubb*, *Aizid* or *Waheguru*. Any method which instructs to approach and realise that power is called religion. Sikhism is one of such well-founded eleven religions of the world — their youngest brother, and so, closest to the present milieu. Here, I am discussing the essentiality and indispensability of growing uncut hair of whole body without doing any harm to them in any way and without changing their natural colour by dyeing according to the decree of Sikh doctrine — "*Sabat Soorat*" — the natural and wholesome existence.

Before touching the religious injunction and importance of human hair, I will briefly describe some other aspects of hair and man's concern with and interest in them. There are many more aspects of hair, but in this paper I mention their concern in physiognomy, palmistry, religion, aesthetics, romance, spirituality, naturality, forensic science and in various esoteric

concepts in addition to their use in sorcery, as it terms them as the medium of "External Soul" of man, and the harm done to them is done also to the man concerned.

Regarding aesthetics, the beard and moustaches of a man show his masculinity and virility and in appearance these two characters have been robustly rife, along with his stature, throughout human history. So far as romance is concerned, the charming eyes and long dallying locks or tresses or *zuls* have been a great and fascinating subject of poets and the writers of romantic prose. I believe that the Arabic, Persian and Urdu poets are at the summit of using 'lock' or "*zulf*", and if their verses pertaining to charm and beauty are collected and compiled, they can make a very huge volume of poetry. The praise and pull or attraction is described in both types of love — *Ishq Majjaazi* and *Ishq Haqeeqi*, that is physical love and spiritual love, or say love for this world and body and love for God and Soul. In religion, the love is spiritual and the beloved's locks are praised in this decorum and diction and Sikhism also does not lag behind and is Sufistic in this respect, which I will describe in this paper.

I will cite some thoughts of English writers about locks, tresses or *zuls*. It may be clarified here that in English language, a tress refers especially to the hair or lock of a girl or a woman, the hair which are loose, long and are hanging. William Shakespeare truly realised the value of human hair and decisively and dignitarily says, "But in the way of bargain mark you me, I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair."³⁴ Even the grey hair of old age are respected everywhere, as we read, "By common consent grey hair are a crown of glory; the only object of respect that can never excite envy."³⁵

About hair, now we look at the view which was held by the religions, which preceded the Sikh faith. As it is believed universally, the Rigved is the oldest book of the world, and Hinduism the oldest religion, if it can at all be designated as a religion, because it primarily does not fulfil the essential conditions of a religion. Neither having a particular founder nor a particular supreme scripture, nor a certain place of its origin and place of worship, due to which it is described by a famous Hindu theologian, "Hinduism is a very vague one. It has neither denotation nor connotation. It conveys no meaning to us".³⁶ He further comments, "The term Hinduism is very vague. It is to be rejected summarily — importance of names as well as forms".³⁷ A well-known erudite states, "Because of comprehensiveness and its unceasing growth, Hinduism is impossible to define. Having no common creed or set of dogmas or practices, no universally acceptable canon, no church, and no uniformity of worship, Hinduism is thus not a religion, but a medley of faiths

linked to some degree by a common pantheon".³⁸ A creditable Hindu scholar has written, "One finds in its fold theological doctrines of different shades, religious practices of different types and numerous cults and creeds. The Hindu tradition has never prescribed uniform way of life to be followed by all".³⁹ This is the reason that another Hindu theologian of great glory has taken the resort of calling Hinduism, "Vedism".⁴⁰

At any rate, here we are concerned with the wearing, caring, protecting and preserving the naturally grown hair. So let us examine what the *Rig Veda* and other *Vedas* say about this subject. It will not be possible here to give detailed citations. Anyhow, I will try to do it briefly. My point at issue — wearing naturally grown hair without tampering with them, i.e., to cut, pluck or dye them.

Bhardwaj prays to his spiritual mentor, whom he described as the one who wears uncut long hair.⁴¹ The sage or *Rishi* named Iss recites an incantation or mantra in which deity named Ribhu⁴² is described having very lustrous and impressive beard and moustaches. A *Rishi* named Deeragbtama praises the *keshas*⁴³ of the deities Arun and Mitra, and also tells that God Agni also praised them. The Sage Jooti praises the Sun God⁴⁴ for his dazzling *keshas* which emit light (he might have meant rays). *Rishi* Vishwamittar also praises the Sun God for his *keshas*.⁴⁵ Prajapati prays for good growth and protection of his *keshas* and hair on his face.⁴⁶ Prajapati again prays for the promotion of hair on his whole body including his genitals.⁴⁷ Prajapati says that he is pleased to see others wearing all hair of body intact.⁴⁸ The *Rishi* named Kuttas⁴⁹ describes Vishnu wearing long hair. In this *slok* the word *kapper*, i.e., *kesho* — having long hair on head has been used. The *Rishi* named Prameshri describes Shiva having very long plaited hair (*jataan*).⁵⁰ The sage Pratesham praises the Agni Deity addressing him as *Kesho*.⁵¹ Jamdaggan *Rishi* got a herb from the house of Asitasya to use in order to increase the growth of his *kesh*.⁵² Brahma mentions the *kesha* of a hermit who is coming to attend the ceremony of a *yagna*.⁵³ The sage Weet Havvaya advises somebody to use certain medicine to save his *keshas* from shedding.⁵⁴ The Sage Bhrigoo advises the people never to do any harm to hair and keep them carefully.⁵⁵

Not only the *Vedas*, the other Hindu scriptures, i.e., the *Upnishads*, the *Simrities* and the *Puranas* also mention the importance of growing long hair. There is a mention of Indra and Virochan that once they both went to see Prajapati and saw him looking at the image of his face in the transparent water.⁵⁶ They asked him what he was looking at, on which he told them that he was being pleased to see himself *sabat soorat* — having his hair intact from

his feet to the top of his head. *Rishi* Yagwalk praises and similises his bodily hair as natural and important as the leaves are to the plants.⁵⁷ Another Upnishad describes the tuft or *joora* of hair as the dwelling place of God.⁵⁸ Garbho Upnishad also praises the *keshas*.⁵⁹

The *Simritis* also uphold the wearing of long hair as we find in *Manu Simriti*,⁶⁰ *Sankh Simriti*,⁶¹ *Vashisht Simriti*,⁶² *Gotam Simriti*⁶³ and *Laghuttam Simriti*.⁶⁴ The *Puranas* also talk about *keshas* and tell that Brahma himself had very long hair.

¹ In all countries, cultures and concepts of faith, the long hair used to be so sacred that they were highly respected and were cut only when the people were punished for some religious sin, social vice or some legal crime, as we find in the *Sri Mad Bhagwat Puran* that Lord Krishna, on the intercession of Rukmani for her brother Rukman, shaves off his hair on the head, beard and moustache⁶⁵ as a substitute for death.

There goes a current legend recorded in many books that when Shivji shook and fluttered his *jataas* or long tufted and plaited hair angrily, two warriors appeared spontaneously, who desecrated the *yagna* of his father-in-law as a revenge, and the descendants of those two warriors were called *Juts*, being born of the *jataas* of Shiva.⁶⁶ The Balmiki Ramayana states that when Lord Rama started for exile from his home, he decided to lead the life of a hermit and so he plaited his long hair with the sap of a banyan tree.⁶⁷

Here it is a sad comment that the Hindus have deserted their original faith *Sanatan Dharma* of their *Rishis*, *Munis* and deities by becoming clean-shaven, and are trying hard to even absorb Sikhs in this disfigured, distorted and profane form. Some of them did it to the Sikhs forcibly and violently in 1984.

As the portraits of the great founders of religions show, they wore long hair, including Moses and Christ. Abraham is believed to be the common ancestor of Hebrews or Jews, Christians and Muslims; and not to speak of his hair on other regions of his body, even his moustaches were partly cut as a punishment for adultery — as the penalty imposed on him by his legitimate wife. But long after him, his descendants mostly began to cut their whiskers and then beards, and then undergo tonsure also. However, some of the followers of these faiths, usually the priests and religious leaders, even now grow long hair. As the *Hadees* tells, Prophet Mohammad took special care for his long head-hair, loosely hanging on his nape and back, and for the facial hair also, to keep them clean, oiled and combed. Here, my pen cannot help appreciating and paying tributes to the Muslims who through the *Hadees*, as inherited in Islamic literature,⁶⁸ have preserved the details of even the ordi-

nary activities, habits and actions of their Prophet, including description of his complete physiognomy received through his intimate contemporaries; *Ashaabs*, somatic traits which we Sikhs do not have on record.

We see a host of photographs of philosophers, hermits, rulers, scholars and scientists from ancient times to date, who wore long hair.

It is worth mentioning that like the Indians in general and the Indian sages, *rishis*, *munis*, warriors and deities, the gymnosophists of Greece used to wear long hair. Amongst Indian religious personages, Lord Krishna, who was rather more romantic than religious, was called *Kesho* — the one who wears long hair — but how strange it is that Hindus never depict his beard !

Now we come to the inseparable connection or relationship between the Sikh faith and wearing unshorn naturally growing hair — the hair of any part of the human body called *kesh*. Hence, here emerges the second title of this paper, "*Kesh and Sikhism*", Man's "*Sabat Soorat*" — the wholesome natural form is the root-concept and belief of the Sikh Gurus and Sikhism. From his very advent, man has been thinking of God anthropomorphically, as he believed that God created him as a paragon of creation in his own likeness about which it is apt to quote the Bible (The Old Testament), "And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." And further, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; Male and Female, created He them".⁶⁹ Therefore, Moses and Christ followed the original image of God and lived as the wearers of long hair.

Like the days of yore, all the Sikh Gurus wore long hair, but this condition was irrevocably enjoined on the Sikhs by the tenth and last corporeal Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, who founded the Khalsa. There are many writers of the account of Sikh History and Religion — Sikhs, non-Sikh Indians, Muslims and Europeans. Amongst the Europeans, Max Arthur Macauliffe squats at the summit, who dedicated thirty years of his life to study, research and write *The Sikh Religion* in six volumes (1909).

The events immediately on the very heels following the path leading to the birth of Khalsa were like this. The unarmed Hindus or even the Sikhs, who believed in Sikhism, were intimidated and cowed down, insulted, looted and killed merely for a wish of the Muslim rulers, and sometimes they had to face dangers to reach Guru Gobind Singh to have his sight (*Darshan*), as they were often robbed or even killed on the way. So he had resolved to make his Sikhs and impart them an identity of permanent recognition, and of course, his heart, head, emotions and imagination had already been fired with an unforgettable incident of the martyrdom of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, just 25 years earlier in 1675 A.D., when the Hindus of Delhi did not muster

courage even to receive the dead body of the martyr, who gave his life for their faith and cultural freedom. This incident prompted the emergence of Khalsa — the pure, purified from the dirt of the impurity of Brahminical caste system, the root-cause of disunity and weakness of Indians.

One day a company of Sikhs came and told the Guru what had happened to them and requested him to protect them, "We have found it very difficult to approach thee on account of the violence of Muhammadans. Some of our company have been killed on the way. Others have been wounded, and have returned to their homes. To whom can we look for assistance but to thee?"⁷⁰ This narration and supplication of those Sikhs was the clarion call to the conscience of Guru Gobind Singh the Great. "The Guru invited all his Sikhs to attend the great Baisakhi fair at Anandpur, without shaving or cutting their hair".⁷¹ Thousands and thousands of Sikhs attended the Vaisakhi of 1699 A.D. What happened there is well-known. But here we are concerned with *kesh* — long hair as, "The Guru always held the belief that it would be proper and advantageous to his Sikhs to wear long hair and otherwise not alter man's God-given body, and he often broached the subject to them."⁷² So in the Sikh congregation on that Vaisakhi, he made the identity of his initiated *Panj Piyare* — The Five Beloveds distinct (*niyare*). Then he gave them the discourse of conduct and their identity revolved round the pivot of five K's, "They must always wear the following articles whose names begin with a K, namely, *kesh* (long hair), *kangha* (comb), *kirpan* (sword), *kachh* (short drawers), *kara* (steel bangle)".⁷³ After initiating the five beloved ones, he requested them with folded hands, to initiate him also, which they did as he had done to them about which we read, "I am the son of the Immortal God. It is by His order I have been born and have established this form of initiation. They who accept it, shall henceforth be known as Khalsa. The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me."⁷⁴

It was a unique type of initiation in the religious history of the world, about which Bhai Gurdas Singh ecstatically pours out his verses, writing and singing, "*Wah, wah! Gobind Singh Aapey Gur chela*".⁷⁵ (Wonderful, wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, who is a Guru as well as a disciple). He also writes, "*Sir kes Dhar kar kharag ko sabh dusht pachhara*".⁷⁶ (Wearing the long hair on his head and wielding sword, he defeated his all enemies).

I have already quoted Macauliffe above, and even if you read the writings of any number of writers, you will see that *kesh* come first of all the five K's. From that very Vaisakhi day, the *kesh* became the foremost and indispensable symbol of the identity of Sikhs. What a wonder and divine vision of Guru Gobind Singh the Great, the spot where the Khalsa was founded or was born was named by him, Keshgarh Sahib !

Let us examine now what does the Sikh Scripture say about *kesh* ? And what do the *Rahitnamas*, the rules of conduct written by Sikh writers, state about *kesh* ? Both types of these sources, if put together, are twenty-eight⁷⁷ in numbers, speaking on various aspects of Sikh way of life. Anyhow, all of them revere the *keshas*. However, we may mention here what is said about them, the very cornerstone of the foundation of Khalsa, in Guru Granth Sahib, by Guru Gobind Singh himself and Bhai Nandlal Goya. The Brahmins, the leaders of Hindus, themselves had degenerated under the weight of ecclesiasticism, caste system, the practice of untouchability and cutting and shaving hair, but the Khalsa had to and has to give up all the customs, beliefs and practices of Brahmins, as a relapse to Brahminism was conducive to the extinction of the Sikh way of life against which Guru Gobind Singh warned the Khalsa, exhorting :

*"Jab Lag Rahey Khalsa Niyara,
Tab lag tej diya main sara.
Jab eh gahen bipran ki reet,
Main na karon inh ki parteet"*.⁷⁸

I have given all power and effulgence to the Khalsa so long as they lead a Sikh's distinct way of life. But when the Sikhs will relapse to Brahminism, I will not trust them.

As it is associated with him by many people, he also said :

"Khalsa mero roop hai khas, Khalse mein haun karon niwas".

The Khalsa is completely my own image and I dwell within the Khalsa.

Here the word "*roop*" connotes a definite stress on wearing long hair, (and other bodily hair intact also), with a turban tied on one's head. If a clean-shaven person wears all other four symbols, he neither represents the *roop* of the Khalsa nor that of Guru Gobind Singh.

According to the Sikh belief and practice, it is the long hair which are essential coupled with turban, and as you all know, the Sikh apostasy begins with cutting, trimming or shaving hair, and then the turban on the head disappears. None should understand that I have belittled or ignored the other four K's — *kangha* (comb), *kirpan* (sword), *kara* (iron bangle) and *kachh* (short drawers). What I mean is that the long hair and turban on head speaks volumes of the identity of a Sikh, just on sight even from a distance.

Here, I feel like giving a comment. The Hindus in particular, because their population in India is many *crores*, spend millions of Rupees on cutting their hair or getting them cut from barbers, claim to be clinging to *Manu Dharam*. I have studied *Manu Simriti*⁷⁹ very thoroughly and have read that Manu speaks absolutely a different language from that of the present Hindus.

He respects uncut long hair to such a deep reverence that he advises the people to keep their hair clean, taking them to be so pious that they should not be touched without cleaning and washing their hands after eating something. The hair should not be caught by anybody rudely and dishonorably, and if anybody catches and pulls them, his hands should be cut, and even in a battlefield, the enemy should not attack one's hair.

I have already spoken about man's anthropomorphic vision of God. Let us see how it has been done in Guru Granth Sahib by the Sikh Gurus and the saints whose holy word has been included in Guru Granth Sahib. Hair and turban have been associated with the sacred appearance of God.

The *kesh* have been in religious and spiritual devotion the dearest and most valuable asset of human life and represented life of the person concerned, and though opposed to Sikh thought and belief, some non-Sikhs, especially the Hindus, offer their cut hair (tonsure) at the shrines of their gods and goddesses as if they have offered their very life to their deities. Here we are concerned with the Sikh concept about long hair, which neither cut nor harmed in any way, are used as a service to God as we find it in Guru Granth Sahib, when they are in service as a *chaur*.⁸⁰ It is offered to be used to dust the feet of the Lord.⁸¹ Anthropomorphically God has been described having "*Sabat Soorat Dastar Sira*" — having His natural visage and a turban on His head.⁸² The founder of Sikh faith depicts Him rather with more physiognomic traits :

"*Terey bankoy loen dant resala, Sohne nakk jinh lamrey wala*".⁸³

O my Lord, you have beautiful eyes and teeth, beautiful nose and long hair.

The trait '*lamrey wala*' (long hair) is especially noticeable.

The hymns of saints or *Bhagats* included in Guru Granth Sahib are called *Bhagat Bani*. The *Bhagats* had long hair and used to have a turban on their head, and some describe how the long hair⁸⁴ are burnt like dry grass when the body is cremated along with turban, as Kabir and Ravidas⁸⁵ have expressed themselves. Kabir⁸⁶ warns the proud man, who prides on seeing his slantly tied turban. Namdev praises the turban of the Lord "*Khoob teri pagri*".⁸⁷ Even Guru Arjun Dev feels blessed due to God's Grace, who has awarded and honoured him with a turban or *dumatra*⁸⁸ like a champion. Farid reminds himself of his approaching end, day by day seeing his grey beard.⁸⁹ Farid⁹⁰ describes his well cared and profusely grown long hair on his head, beard and moustaches.

Bhai Nand Lal Goya was an exceptionally devoted Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh and lived for many years in his presence. He was a great scholar

of Arabic, Persian and Hindi and wrote verses mostly in Persian. He was enamoured of the charming beauty of *kesh* and wrote verses on locks or *zulf*s, with his intense spiritual love for *kesh*, which he expressed in his different Persian works.⁹¹

For His spiritual awareness and values, *keshas* were beyond any worldly price and here I quote one of his famous verses :

"Deen duniya darkamande aan pari rukhsare ma. Har do alam qeemte yakk tar Mooye yarey ma".

O Lord, O my friend, both, faith and the world are in the catch of your snare or string, O You who have the fairy-like cheeks, and this world as well as the next, both are not worth your single hair.

The initiated Khalsa *Panth* will ever remain indebted to Bhai Nand Lal, as out of all the *Rahitnamahs*, he is most decisive, incisive, vivid and effective in elevating and properly describing the importance and indispensability of *kesh*, and that also with a prodigal brevity :

*"Nishane Sikhi een panj harf kaaf, Hargiz na bashad een panj muaaf. Kara, Kardho, Kachh, Kangha Bidaan, Bila kes hech ast jumla nishaan".*⁹²

There are symbols of five letters — *Kaaf* (Five K's) in Sikhism, which cannot be exempted. There are — Iron bracelet, sword, short drawers and *kangha*, but they are meaningless in the absence of *kesh*.

Yet another important thing is to be described — the dyeing of hair is not allowed by the Sikh tenets. So much is said about it — pro and anti-pro — those who dye their hair do so to conceal their age to look younger than they really are. It is to de-naturalise their God-given body about which again Bhai Nand Lal writes :

*"Harf hai kaat ast een panj kaaf, Bida Nand bawam goyam khilaf. Huqqa, Hajamat, Halal-o-haram, Ba cheeshe Hina kard ru siyah-faam".*⁹³

There are five contemptible letters *Kaaf* against which Nand Lal says, and they are smoking, shaving, flesh of an animal killed in Semitic way, illegitimate possession or doing anything evil (*haram*) and dyeing beard with myrtle (*mehndi*) or any other dye.

Sehjdhari Sikhs : The mention of *sehjdhari* Sikhs is unavoidable in the Sikh discussion of hair. Honestly speaking, without exception, they have simply become a sham so far as the Sikh faith is concerned. A *sehjdhari* Sikh used to commit to the Guru that gradually, he would give up his previous

practices and beliefs, would grow long hair and become a Singh — *Sabat soorat*, but it does not mean that a *sehjdhari* and his children and their children, generation by generation should remain *sehjdhari*. When will this circle of 'sehaj' — slowness — end and when will they be really Sikhs ? Or will they remain clean-shaven and still be interfering in Sikh religious institutions ? It is enough to say about this matter that they will be blessed by the Guru if they quicken their pace on the path of becoming Sikhs of *kesadhari* identity from the stagnation of *sehajdhan* — generation after generation.

Hair should not be depilated from any part of the body. Apostasy has got to be stopped ! It is increasing day by day, by the destruction of an invaluable gift of nature. Long hair is the crown of Sikh faith. Guru Nanak Dev has rightly written :

"*Je jarwana par-harey jar wes kraindi aaiye*".⁹⁴

If an aggressor tries to scare away old age, even then it does come in different guises.

Here, the word *jarwana* is especially notable. The Guru has used the word aggressor for one who attempts to beguile the natural, biological and gerontological phenomenon; as old age, if concealed by dyeing hair or by depilation, does appear in bodily troubles; in the guises of decrease in eyesight, sense of hearing, pains in body, and many other sorts of ailments.

Like we disturb the natural ecology of environment, people who destroy their hair are disturbing the ecology of their body — rendering a great loss to themselves. Think of how much energy is spent on repeated growing of hair ! Of what avail is this perversion or self-destruction ?

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SIKHISM AT THE CROSSROADS*

Sikh Youth of Pittsburgh

Sikhism is at the crossroads. Which is the "right road" to follow ? Will anyone guide us or can we find it ourselves ?

¹ There is no unity. We are savagely fighting amongst ourselves. Factions and groups have been created everywhere. We are wasting our energies in fighting instead of using it to find the "right road". The aim of the creation of the Khalsa has not been fulfilled. What are the causes and remedies ?

Unexamined life is not worth living (Socrates 300 B.C.). Similarly, any unexamined institution, political, social, economic or religious, is not worth existing.

It is high time we examine our religious institutions and take timely action to reform ourselves in a new environment/society. If this is not done, there is danger of revolt by all sensible Sikhs, particularly the youth. Some Sikh intellectuals have predicted that Sikh religion as practised today has no future.

Sikh religion is not practised as preached. Sikhs in general and youth in particular are confused about this situation.

The caste system was abolished. We are still living in this system. Do we require a "dictator" to pull us out of this evil way of life?

Similarly, priesthood was also abolished. But we continue to allow the priests to exploit our emotions and sentiments. Illiterate and semi-literate priests cannot interpret our religion intelligently. They always try to impose blind faith which is authoritarian, not acceptable to Sikh youth. These priests have destroyed the spirit of Sikhism. Can we allow them to destroy our souls also ?

Real life problems (basic needs) are neither discussed nor efforts made to explore means to solve them. We are made to live with false and irrelevant issues. This cannot go on for ever.

All religions are trying to meet the basic needs. Jews look after their members right from cradle to grave. We are still living in the primitive stage of religion. How should our religion be reformed ?

* Courtesy: Sardar Hardyal Singh Paul, North Royalton, U.S.A.

In practice, snobbery, falsehood, bigotry and hypocrisy have replaced reasoning, logic and rational thinking preached by our Gurus.

The way Sikhism has been preached, has failed to achieve happiness, health and prosperity. On the other hand, we are being preached how to lead a wretched life.

The preaching of our religion *kirt karna* (work ethics) is not being practised. The preaching *wand chhakna* (economic equality) is also not being practised. We have no control over our desires and passions (excitement, anger, greed and lust). We are neither living in harmony with ourselves nor with nature as preached by Guru Nanak. This is the main reason of our unhappiness. Sikhism as practised today has failed to guide us.

Sikh priests and advocates talk about salvation. Our ship is not sinking. No one talks about the basic present day relevant issues.

We are neither born evil nor have committed sins as is preached by some other religions. We are the master of our fate.

We are not democrats. Our institutions do not run in a democratic way. Consensus of community members is neither taken nor considered while taking important community decisions.

We have no forum or study circle where we can discuss our problems. Our gatherings in gurdwaras are neither religious nor social.

We mix politics with religion in a way that we are neither religious nor politicians.

Due to wrong interpretations of our religion by priests and fundamentalist advocates, we are still in the feudal age. Our priests preach as if we are uneducated living in agricultural age in Punjab.

We are not self-critic nor do we tolerate any criticism with the result that we are unable to reform ourselves.

Sikhs are losing their identity. We have neither any mission nor public relations.

In the past, many Sikhs, Hindus, Sindhis and *sehajdharis* got alienated and formed their own sects. The same is happening with the youth, who are not treated fairly. All who believe in the Gurus and Granth Sahib are Sikhs. Our priests and advocates emphasise more on *amritdharis* and *keshdharis* with the result that the *sehajdharies* are now getting alienated. The way they are treated in gurdwara meetings is humiliating.

Besides religion, Sikhs living in U.S.A. have many social, economic, educational and other problems. First generation Sikhs are suffering from

generation and cultural gap due to which the family ties are breaking up, causing unhappiness and miseries. We have not developed any social organization to help us in this matter. Our institutions, like gurdwaras, have failed to help us.

In the past, criticism has not been tolerated by many Sikhs. We have to be self-critic if we want to reform ourselves.

We have great hopes of our youth. They realize our shortcomings and can help in improving the situation if given proper opportunities. They must be trusted and given part in the management of our community.

What we have said above should not be taken as the negative side. Our thinking is positive. Let us be sincere to ourselves and find time to think about our religion. Let us be aware of the pitfalls and the obstructions to find the "right road". This may be time-consuming, but not difficult.

Discuss the problems with other community members. If you find something wrong being preached, do not hesitate to bring it to the notice of the management of gurdwaras. Interaction will help you to find correct solutions.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED ON THE SEMINAR HELD AT CHANDIGARH ON THE 26TH-27TH OCTOBER, 1996

RESOLUTION NO. 1

All the participants of the Seminar, *Apostasy among Sikh Youth – Causes and Cures*, organised by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, at the Panjab University Campus, Chandigarh on 26th-27th October, 1996 unanimously resolve that concerted efforts should be made by all Sikhs in India and abroad to check growing trend of Apostasy among the Sikh Youth. Apathy towards religion may be a general phenomenon throughout the world but the Sikh Youth become more conspicuous when they are bereft of their religious symbols. There are several causes leading to this state of affairs – political suppression, social isolation and ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation. Apathy and indifference on the part of parents has aggravated the problem.

We are of the firm view that a massive campaign has to be launched to impart religious education to the Sikh parents in general and the Sikh Youth in particular. Religious instruction in Sikh theology and Sikh history may be made an integral part of educational system in all the Khalsa Schools and Colleges by appointing whole-time instructors, whose expenses may be met jointly by the Managing Committees of the Institutions and the S.G.P.C., Amritsar. Where there is no Khalsa School, Sunday schools may be started in the Gurdwaras to impart religious education to the youth.

The Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, alongwith other major Sikh organisations, has started a Movement to bring about an awareness of the Gurus' teachings – *Gurmat Chetna Lehar*. In Students Contact Programme, it is proposed to hold a *Gurmat Camp* in every Khalsa School and College. *The Camp Manual* has been prepared in Punjabi and English. It will be supplied free to every student taking part in the Camp. It contains essential information about Sikhism. District-wise committees have been formed to implement this programme.

We appeal to all *Panthic* organisations and individual Sikhs living in India and abroad to join this movement in a big way.

RESOLUTION NO. 2

This gathering has reviewed the follow-up action on the resolutions passed in the Sardar Daljeet Singh Memorial International Sikh Studies Conference held at Chandigarh on 20-21 September, 1995. It has noted, however, that progress is held up in case of some items which demand a positive role by the S.G.P.C. These items are :

- A notification hanning the so-called textual analysis or research questioning authenticity and integrity of Guru Granth Sahib.
- Standard computerised version of the *Bani* in Guru Granth Sahib.
- Policy guidelines on creation and management of Sikh chairs in Universities, etc.
- Unhindered access to Nanakana Sahib and other Sikh shrines in Pakistan.
- An Advisory Committee on preservation of historic buildings, relics, artifacts, etc.
- Coordination Committee for Vaisakhi 1999 celebrations.
- Inclusion of a citation in the *ardas* to commemorate the martyrs of 1984 and after.
- Setting up a Committee for religious instruction in Schools, Colleges, etc.
- Use of electronic media and TV channel to propagate Sikh values and culture, and to share the message of the Gurus with the world community.

This conference calls upon the S.G.P.C. to take appropriate action on these matters on priority basis.

RESOLUTION NO. 3

This conference wishes to record its appreciation of the announcement made by Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President, S.G.P.C., in the last year's conference, for grant of Rs. 5.00 *laks* to be given to the Institute of Sikh Studies every year. The Conference has noted with satisfaction that the grant for the last year has already been paid. This Conference hopes that grant for the current year will be released at the earliest, and that it will continue to be paid regularly in future also.

RESOLUTION NO. 4

This seminar organised at the initiative of the Institute of Sikh Studies has yielded valuable information required to deal with the problem of Apostasy. There are two other vital issues confronting the Panth. These are:

- a) Sikh Personal Law, and
- b) Sikh Gurdwara Legislation

This Conference calls upon the Institute to organise special seminar (s) in order to articulate the thinking of the Panth on these issues.

RESOLUTION NO. 5

On the occasion of the five hundredth hirth anniversary (1969) of

Guru Nanak Dev ji, the University Grants Commission agreed to set up four chairs commemorating this momentous event in Indian history. One chair was offered to the Department of History, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, for the pursuance of Sikh studies in Eastern India. This part of the country took up Sikh studies nearly a century ago. The Calcutta University is the first University, outside Punjab, which has a rich tradition in the conduct of Sikh studies. After the chair was set up, Jadavpur University invited Prof. Chandra Banerjee to be the first holder. For nearly ten years, Prof. Banerjee carried on pioneering research from this chair, which remains unsurpassed even today. Well known Journal, *The Sikh Review*, bears testimony to his dedication.

After retirement of Prof. Banerjee, Prof. Amalendu Dey continued to teach Sikh history from the Guru Nanak Chair till his retirement in the early part of 1995.

We understand that there is a move on the part of the University authorities to abandon this tradition of Sikh studies initiated by the said chair. It is also reported that this chair may be thrown open to any scholar — not necessarily having any specialisation in Sikh studies.

Such an eventuality will be a gross violation of the concept for which the Chair was originally set up nearly three decades ago. It is sure to be a loss to the development of Sikh studies in Eastern India. The Sikhs of Calcutta and other parts of India view any such step of the University as a great set-back to the rights and privileges of the Sikhs as an important minority.

This gathering of Sikh scholars views this move with serious concern, and calls upon the University not to take any steps that could violate its original commitment to research in Sikh History alone.

RESOLUTION NO. 6

There are large numbers of Sikhs belonging to backward communities like Vanjaras, Sikligars, Lobanas, etc., (population estimated at 8-10 crores), outside Punjab. Unfortunately, they have remained neglected. The Panth owes them a duty to look after them and to reinforce the feeling that they are an integral part of the Panth.

Apart from other programmes to ameliorate their lot, it seems very desirable that they be associated with the S.G.P.C. This gathering of Sikh scholars, therefore, calls upon the President, S.G.P.C., Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra to co-opt atleast two members from these communities outside Punjab to the newly-elected house of the S.G.P.C.

ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣਾ

—ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਤੇ ਉਪਾਅ—

ਡਾ. ਹਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਾਨ

ਧਾਰਮਕ ਰੁਚੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਨ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ-ਅਨੁਯਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਵੇਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ-ਵਿਆਪੀ ਲਛਣ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਪਦਾਰਥਕ ਉੱਨਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਲਾਰਵੀਂ ਮਾਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਨੋ ਦਿਨ ਵਧ ਤੇ ਵਧ ਪਦਾਰਥਵਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਅਨਾਤਮਵਾਦੀ (materialist) ਬਣਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਕਾਈਸ਼ਵਰਵਾਦੀ (monotheist) ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅਨਿੱਖੜ ਅੰਗ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ੈਦਾਈਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਪਰਵਾਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਅਵੇਸਲੇਪਨ ਕਾਰਨ, ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਘਾਤਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦਾ, ਰਬੰ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਣ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਤਕੜੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਧਰਮ-ਵਿਮੁਖਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਸ-ਹੀਨਤਾ ਵਲ ਝੁਕਾਅ ਇਸ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਮੁਹਰਲੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਤਿ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਤੇ ਸਿਦਕੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੇਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੇਤੀ ਵਧ ਤੇ ਵਧ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਤੇ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਹਾਕਾਂ ਮਾਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਹ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਨਾਜ਼ਕ ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾਜਨਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੇ ਸੂਚਕ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਰਦਿਆਂ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਕੌਮੀ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ, ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹਾਲੀ, ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਬੜੇ ਦੁਖ ਭਰੇ ਲਹਿਜੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਉਂ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

ਦੇਖਤੇ ਹੀ ਦੇਖਤੇ ਸਭ ਕਾਛਲਾ ਲੁਟਤਾ ਗਿਆ,

ਹਾਏ ਸਦ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਕਿ ਅਹਿਸਾਸੇ ਜ਼ਿਆਂ ਜਾਤਾ ਰਹਾ।

ਅਰਥਾਤ, 'ਹੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਭਰਾਵੇ! ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਈਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਦਿਨ-ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਲੁਟ-ਮਾਰ ਵੇਖ-ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਬੜਾ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਜੋ ਗੁਣਾ ਵਧ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਇਸ ਸਿਥਲ ਤੇ ਅਵੇਸਲੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ (ਅਨੁਭਵ, feeling) ਹੀ ਮਾਨੋ ਮਰ-ਮਿਟ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ'।

2.

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਭੁੱਖੀਵਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਵਾਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਚਿੰਤਾਜਨਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਵਾਂ-ਨਵੇਲਾ ਤੇ ਘਟ-ਉਮਰਾ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਯਾਈ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਕੁ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਸ-ਬਦੇਸ਼ ਖਿੰਡੇ-ਪੁੰਡੇ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਨਾਲੇ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਜਾਂ ਸਨਾਖਤ (identity) ਦੀ ਅਚੂਕ ਤੇ ਅਮਿਟ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਪਛਾਣ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਤੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ :

'ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ'¹

* 605, ਸੈਕਟਰ 16, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ।

ਦੇ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅਮਲੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਉਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਨੇ ਬੜੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਆਪੇ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ :

ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ-ਏ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਈਂ ਪੰਜ ਹਰਫ਼ ਕਾਫ਼,
ਹਰਗਿਜ਼ ਨਾ ਬਾਸੰਦ ਈਂ ਪੰਜ ਮੁਆਫ਼।
ਕੜਾ, ਕਾਰਦੇ, ਕਛ, ਕੰਘਾ ਬਦਾਂ,
ਬਿਲਾ ਕੇਸ ਹੇਚ ਅੰਦ ਜੁਮਲਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਂ।²

ਅਰਥਾਤ "ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਇਹ 'ਪੰਜ ਕਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਕਾਰ' ਹਨ: ਕੜਾ, ਕਿਰਪਾਨ, ਕਛੱਹਿਰਾ, ਕੰਘਾ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਸ; ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਛੋਟ ਜਾਂ ਖੁੰਝਾਈ ਕਦੇ ਮੁਆਫ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਏਗੀ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੇਤੇ ਰਖਣਾ ਕਿ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਇਹ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਬੇਅਰਥ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ।"

ਇਸ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਐਲਾਨ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਤੇ ਚਿਤਾਰਨਾ ਵੀ ਅਤੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ, ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਦੀ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਸ਼ਹਾਦਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਸੰਨ 1676 ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਲੀਓਂ ਆਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਈ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਤੀ ਇਕ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਪੁੱਛ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਬ ਸੁਣਾਇਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਕੱਢ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਨੇ ਇਉਂ ਕਾਨੀਬੰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ :

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਨਿ ਕਹਿ ਐਸੇ, ਗਰਜਤਿ ਬੇਲੇ, ਜਲਧਰ ਜੇਸੇ।
ਇਸ ਬਿਪਿ ਕੇ, ਅਬ ਪੰਥ ਬਨਾਵੇ, ਸਕਲ ਜਗਤ ਮਹਿ, ਬਹੁ ਬਿਦਤਾਵੇ।
ਲਾਖਹੁ ਨਰ ਜਗ ਕੇ, ਇਕ ਬਾਇੰ, ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਏਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਾਇ।
ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਥਕ, ਪਛਾਨਯੋ ਪਰੇ, ਰਲੇ ਨ ਕਯੋਹੂੰ, ਕੈ ਸਿਹੁੰ ਕਰੇ।
ਜਥਾ ਬਕਨ ਮਹਿ, ਹੰਸ ਨ ਛਪੈ, ਗ੍ਰਿਭਨਿ ਬਿਖੈ, ਮੋਰ ਜਿਮ ਦਿਖੈ।
ਜਯੋ ਖਰਗਨ ਮਹਿ ਬਲੀ ਤੁਰੰਗ, ਜਥਾ ਮ੍ਰਿਗਨ ਮਹਿ ਕੇਹਹਿ ਅੰਗ।
ਤਿਮ ਨਾਨਾ ਭੇਖਣ ਕੇ ਮਾਹਿ, ਮਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਪਰਖਾਹਿ।³

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਸੁਣਾਇਆਂ ਹੀ, ਸਾਵਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਦਲ ਵਾਂਗ ਗਰਜ ਕੇ ਬੇਲੇ : 'ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ ਜੋ ਸਾਰੇ ਜੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਨੁਕੇਕਲੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕੱਠ ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਕੱਤਰਿਤ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਨਜਰੇ ਹੀ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦਿਸੇਗਾ। ਬਗਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਹੰਸ ਛੁਪਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ; ਗਿਰਝਾਂ ਦੇ ਝੁੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਮੋਰ ਲਿਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ; ਖੇਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭੀੜ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਘੋੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਹਿਰਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਢਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਵਖਰਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਤਿਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਮੱਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੇਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕੱਠ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਿਖ ਅਪਣੇ ਉਸ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਸਦਕੇ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਪਰਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇਗਾ"।

ਇਸ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਐਲਾਨ ਤੇ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਫੁੱਟ ਫੁੱਟ ਪੈ ਰਹੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਅਣਖ, ਸਿਦਕ, ਇਰਾਦਾ, ਹਿੰਮਤ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੀ ਉਕਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦਾ ਉਪਜ-ਕਾਰਨ, ਮੂਲ ਸੋਮਾ ਤੇ ਪਰੇਰਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ (motivating force) ਸਿਧ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਐਲਾਨ ਤੇ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਤੇਈ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਘਾਲ-ਕਮਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਸੰਨ 1699 ਦੀ ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਜਿਸ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਜੋਸ਼, ਦਲੇਰੀ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਦਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਉਂਤਿਤ ਕਾਰਜ ਤੇ ਗਰਜਵੇਂ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਅਮਲੀ ਜਾਮਾ ਪੁਆਇਆ, ਉਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਕਰਿਸ਼ਮਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਹੀ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਸਹਿਜ-ਸੁਭਾ ਪੁਕਾਰ ਉਠਦੀ ਹੈ :

ਐਸੀ ਲਾਲ ! ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਕਰੇ?⁴

3

ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਮਲੇਵਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਵੀ ਬਖਸ਼ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਗਵਾਹ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੁੱਸਾ, ਹਿਰਦਾ, ਚਿਹਰਾ-ਮੁਹਰਾ, ਚਾਲ-ਚਲਨ, ਰਹਿਣੀ-ਬਹਿਣੀ, ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਲਾਜਵਾਬ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਇਜ਼ਤ ਤੇ ਦੌਲਤ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਲੁਟੇਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਕਟੌਤ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ, ਅਹਿਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਅਬਦਾਲੀ, ਦੇ ਸਤਵੇਂ ਹਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਪੇ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਕਾਜ਼ੀ ਨੂਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਸੰਨ 1764 ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ 'ਜੰਗਨਾਮੇ' ਵਿਚ, ਮਿਸਾਲ ਵਜੋਂ, ਇਹ ਜੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਉਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਿਤਨਾ ਵੀ ਮਾਣ ਕਰੇ ਉਤਨਾ ਹੀ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਲਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਲਕਬ, 'ਸਿੰਘ' ਭਾਵ 'ਸ਼ੇਰ' ਦੀ ਥਾਂ 'ਸ਼ੇਰ' ਭਾਵ 'ਕੁਰੱ' ਲਿਖਣ ਤੇ ਦੱਸਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਆਪੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਕਾਂਡ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਨੇ ਇਹ ਐਲਾਨੀਆ ਆਖ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ :

ਸਗਾਂ ਰਾ ਮਗੇ ਸਗ ਕਿ ਹਸਤੰਦ ਸ਼ੇਰ,
ਬੇਮੇਦਾਨੇ ਜੰਗ ਅੰਦ ਚੂੰ ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਦਲੇਰ। ...⁵

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੁੜਿਆਂ (ਭਾਵ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ-ਸਿੱਖਾਂ) ਨੂੰ ਕੁੱਤੇ ਨਾ ਆਖੋ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਰੋ-ਪੁਰੇ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਦਲੇਰ ਅਤੇ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਹਨ। . . . ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਹੁਨਰ ਸਿੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆ ਜਾਓ। . . . ਨਾਲੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਨਾਲ ਸੂਰਬੀਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਟੱਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੱਠਭੇੜ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਲਾਮਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਕਲ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਜਾਚ ਵੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਵੋ। . . . ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਚਟਾਨ ਦੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ, ਰੋਅਬਦਾਬ ਵਿਚ, ਪੰਜਾਹ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਧ ਪਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਹੈ। ਲੜਾਈ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਹ ਬੰਦੂਕਾਂ ਚੁਕੇ ਹੋਏ, ਛਾਲਾਂ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੇਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਦਹਾੜਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। . . ."

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਕਾਰ (chronicler) ਦਾ ਇਹ ਅੱਖੀਂ-ਡਿੱਠਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਰ-ਬੀਤਿਆ ਬਿਆਨ ਉਕਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਲੇਰੀ, ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਤੇ ਜਵਾਮਰਦੀ; ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਯੁੱਧ-ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਹਾਰਤ, ਕੌਮੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਰੋਅਬਦਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰੜੀ ਤੇ ਸਖੀ ਸੁਭਾਅ ਉਤੇ ਝਾਤ ਪੁਆਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਥੇ ਤਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਚਰਣਕ ਸੁੱਚਤ ਤੇ ਸੰਜਮ ਦਾ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸੇ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੇਸਧਾਰੀ ਲੋਕ ਇਖਲਾਕੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਇਤਨੇ ਉੱਚੇ ਤੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ, ਹੋਰ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ, ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਔਰਤ ਨੂੰ 'ਬੁੱਢੀ' ਭਾਵ 'ਜ਼ੇਦੀਫ਼' ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਚੋਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਨਾਹਕਾਰੀ ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਚਾਰ-ਵਿਹਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਨੇ ਨਾਂ-ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ।"

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਆਚਰਣ, ਸਿਦਕ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰਭਾਈ, ਭਾਈ ਕੇਸਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਛਿੱਬਰ, ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ 'ਬੇਸਾਵਲੀਨਾਮੇ', ਮਿਤੀ 1780 ਈ., ਵਿਚ ਇਉਂ ਭਰੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ :

ਪਰ ਤਿਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਹੇ, ਜਤੀ, ਸਤੀ, ਰਹਿਤਵਾਨ।

ਪੰਜ ਪੰਜ ਸਤ ਸਤ ਦਿਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਭੁੱਖੇ ਰਹਿਣ, ਪਰ ਐਲਾ ਮੇਲਾ ਧਾਨੁ ਨ ਖਾਣ।

ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਪ ਕਰ, ਤੁਰਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਨਾਸੁ।

ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਪ, ਭਜਨ, ਸੀਸ ਦੇਣੇ ਕਰਿ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼।⁶

ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਕਰਮਾਤੀ ਪਰਭਾਵ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖ, ਈਸਾਈ ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਯਾਈ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ, ਕੈਪਟਨ ਜੇ. ਡੀ. ਕਨਿੰਘਮ, ਨੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ, ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਬਕਾਲੀ ਅਨੁਕੂਲਤਾ (relevance) ਦੀ ਮਾਨੋਂ ਮੁੱਹੋਂ-ਬੋਲਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ ਖੋਹਣ ਲਈ (ਸੰਨ 1845-1848 ਵਿਚਾਲੇ) ਲੜੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸੰਨ 1849 ਵਿਚ ਪਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ-ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ 'ਹਿਸਟਰੀ ਆਫ਼ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖਸ' ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ :

A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of (Guru) Gobind (Singh) has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has also operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. The features and external form of a whole people has been modified... Notwithstanding these changes, it has been usual to regard the Sikhs as essentially Hindus... In religious faith and worldly aspirations, they are wholly different from other Indians, and they are bound together by a community of inward sentiment and outward object unknown elsewhere."⁷

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸਜੀਵ ਜਿਹੀ ਰੂਹ ਸਿੱਜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਾਵਨ ਛਾਪ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਬਣਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਟਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਉੱਚਿਆਇਆ, ਸਗੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਸਥੂਲ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਵਡਿੱਤਣ ਵੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ, ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਚਿਹਰਾ-ਮੁਹਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਰੰਗ-ਰੂਪ ਹੀ ਬਦਲਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ... ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਪਰਤੱਖ ਤਬਦੀਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸਲੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਹੀ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਜਿਹਾ ਪਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ... ਪਰੰਤੂ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਭ ਹਿੰਦੂਸਤਾਨੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਭਿੰਨ, ਭਾਵ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅੰਤਰਮੁਖੀ ਜਜ਼ਬੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰਮੁਖੀ ਮੰਤਵ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਨਾਲ ਬੰਧੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ।"

ਇਹ ਉਹੀਓਂ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਸਾਂਝ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਹ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨਹੁੰ ਤੇ ਮਾਸ ਵਰਗਾ ਅਨਿਖੜਵਾਂ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਾ ਉਕਤ ਸਿੰਘਾਊ ਸਰੂਪ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਕਤ ਸਿੰਘਾਊ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਵੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ (ਰੱਬ ਨ ਕਰੇ, ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨ ਕਰੇ) ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੀ ਕਹਾਵਤ :

'ਨਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਬਾਸ, ਨਾ ਬਜੇਗੀ ਥਾਂਸਰੀ'

ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਜਾਂ ਨਿਕਲਣਾ ਇਕ ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ।

4.

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ "ਕਰਿਸ਼ਮੇ" ਜਾਂ "ਜਾਹਰੀ ਕਰਮਾਤ" ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਅਦੁੱਤੀ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਨੇ, ਉਸਦੀ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਵੀਰੂਆਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਹੀ, ਜੋ ਰੰਗ ਵਿਖਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਉਕਤ ਐਲਾਨ ਤੇ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਚ ਕਰ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ, ਉਹ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ

ਹਕੀਕਤ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਆਪ ਹੈ। ਆਪੇ ਸਾਜੀ-ਨਿਵਾਜੀ ਉੱਮਤ, ਭਾਵ 'ਖਾਲਸਾ', ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਭਰਵੇਂ ਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਦਾਦੀਏ ਨਾਲ:

'ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ।

ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੈਂ ਹਉਂ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਸ'।⁸

ਦੇਲਾਨੀਆ ਦਸਣ ਆਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇਸ-ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਵੱਟੜੀ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਬੰਸ ਹੀ ਨਿਛਾਵਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਦ ਆਪ ਇਕ ਦਰਦਨਾਕ ਵਿਸਾਹਘਾਤ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ, 7 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1708 ਈ. ਨੂੰ, ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਮੀਲ ਦੂਰ, ਨੰਦੇੜ (ਦੱਖਣੀ ਹਿੰਦ) ਵਿਖੇ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮਾ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਨ ਹੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ-ਪੂਰਤ ਹੋਣੀ ਵਿਦਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ 'ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਾਕਾਰਤਾ ਲਈ ਵਰ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਸਾਂ ਦੇਂਦਿਆਂ, ਇਹ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਦੇਲਾਨੀਆ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

'ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨ ਕੋਇ।

ਖਵਾਰ ਹੋਇ ਸਭ ਮਿਲੋਗੇ, ਬਚਿਹ ਸ਼ਰਨ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ'।⁹

ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਗਵਾਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਦੋਂ ਉਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਸੀ, ਨਾ ਛਾਉਣੀ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਲੁੜੀਏ ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਧਨ ਤੇ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਜੇ ਸੇਵਕ, ਬਾਬਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਕਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਸ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਕੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਹਾਂ ਉਖੇੜਨ ਲਈ ਪੰਜ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਹਿਤ ਉਤਰ ਵਲ ਤੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸਲਤਨਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਗਾਰਦੇ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੈਂਕੜੇ ਮੀਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਾਸਲਾ ਉਲਾਂਘਦੇ; ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਰਾਹ ਪੱਛਾ ਆਪੇ ਸਾਫ਼ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁੱਠੀ-ਭਰ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਸਮੇਤ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸਰਹੰਦ ਦੀ ਇੱਟ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਟ ਖੜਕਾਈ, ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਭਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਕਮਾਲ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਕੇਵਲ ਦੋ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ, ਮਈ 1710 ਈ. ਨੂੰ, ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਹਰਿਆਣੇ ਦੇ ਕਰਨਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਤਕ ਦੇ ਮੁਗਲਈ ਸੂਬੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸੇ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ; ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੀ ਇਬਾਰਤ (legend) ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਖਾਲਸਈ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਮੁਹਰ ਵੀ ਜਾਰੀ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ :

'ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜ਼ਦ ਬਰ ਹਰ ਦੇ ਆਲਮ, ਤੇਗੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਹਿਬ ਅਸਤ।

ਫ਼ਤਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ਾਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ, ਫ਼ਜ਼ਲੇ ਸੱਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਸਤ'।¹⁰

ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ, ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਚੇ, ਇਹ ਇਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦੀ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਘਟਨਾ, ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬੇਜੋੜ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਉਂ ਹੀ, ਸੰਨ 1699 ਈ. ਨੂੰ ਹੋਈ ਖ਼ਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਸ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੀ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਕ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਬਾਅਦ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਨਾਮਲੇਵੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ, ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਨੇ ਅਫ਼ਗਾਨਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਖੈਬਰ ਦਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਦਰਿਆ ਸਤਿਲੁਜ ਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਚੀਨੀ ਤਿੱਬਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੱਦਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸਿੰਧ ਦੀ ਸੀਮਾ ਤਕ ਜੋ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਸਲਤਨਤ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ 'ਸਰਕਾਰ-ਏ-ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ' ਰਖ ਕੇ, ਇਕ 'ਅਨਹੋਣੀ' ਨੂੰ 'ਹੋਣੀ' ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ 'ਉਲਟੀ ਗੰਗਾ ਵਗਾ ਕੇ' ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੀ ਉਕਤ ਭਵਿੱਖਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਮੁੜ ਸੱਚ ਕਰ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਵਾਰੀਖ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਾਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੀ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਨਵੀਂ ਬਣੀ-ਸਜੀ ਉੱਮਤ ਨੇ ਇੰਨੇ ਥੋੜੇ ਅਰਸੇ ਵਿਚ, ਇੰਨੀ ਬੇਬਸੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਸਰੋਸਾਮਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ, ਇੰਨੇ ਅਕਹਿ ਤੇ ਅਸਹਿ ਕਸ਼ਟ ਸਹਾਰ ਕੇ, ਇੰਨਾ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਰਾਜ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਤੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਜਿਹਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ

ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੇ ਅਜ ਤੇ ਦੇ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਾਖ ਤੇ ਸੇਭਾ, ਰੋਅਬ ਤੇ ਰਸੂਖ ਆਦਿ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਉਦੋਂ ਦੇ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਸਫ਼ੀਰਾਂ, ਸੈਲਾਨੀਆਂ, ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਛਾਪਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਇਹੋ ਜਹੇ ਵਾਕ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਨਾਮਲੇਵਾ ਫੁੱਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਾਏਗਾ :

1. ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ, ਲੂਈ ਫਿਲਪ, ਨੇ ਜੋ ਚਿੱਠੀ 27 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 1835 ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੇਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਲ ਲਿਖ ਭੇਜੀ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ" ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਬੋਧਿਆਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ :
 "Although long distances and oceans part the kingdom of the Punjab from that of France, yet this is no bar to the love that binds our hearts together."¹¹

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਭਾਵੇਂ ਲੰਮੇ ਫਾਸਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਭੁੰਘੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਨੂੰ ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸ ਦੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਖੇੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ, ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਨਿਖੇੜਾ ਉਸ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅਸਾਂ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ"।

2. ਰੂਸ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਨਸ਼ਾਹ, ਅਲੈਗਜ਼ੈਂਡਰ ਜ਼ਾਰ, ਵਲੋਂ ਸੰਨ 1821 ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ :
 "The Emperor is especially the well-wisher of the country reigned over by the King of the Sikhs."¹²

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਰੂਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਹਿਨਸ਼ਾਹ ਉਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਭ-ਇਛੱਕ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਉਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਰਾਜ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।"

3. ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੇ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਜਨਰਲ, ਲਾਰਡ ਆਕਲੈਂਡ ਨੇ 12 ਮਈ 1838 ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ The most powerful and valuable of our friends," ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਸਾਡਾ (ਭਾਵ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ) ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਤਾਕਤਵਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਦਰਯੋਗ ਦੇਸ਼ਤ" ਮੰਨਦਿਆਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ, "By the blessings of prudence, the English and the Sikh Nation will be united to the end of time." ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਸਿਆਣਪ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਦਰਸ਼ਣੀ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਤ ਸਦਕੇ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ, ਸਦਾ ਲਈ ਜੁੜੀਆਂ ਰਹਿਣਗੀਆਂ।"

ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਸਫ਼ੀਰਾਂ, ਸੈਲਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਰਜ ਹਨ :

- ਓ) ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਨ 1829 ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਫ਼ੀਰ, ਵਿਕਟਰ ਜੈਕਮੋਟ, ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭੇਜੀ ਇਕ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸ ਦੇ ਨੇਪੋਲੀਅਨ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਲਨਾਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

"Ranjit Singh is a monarch absolutely independent and possessing the greatest power in Asia after the British... He is better obeyed by his subjects than the Mughal Emperors at the zenith of their power."¹³

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਏਸ਼ੀਆ ਵਿਚ, ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਰਾਜ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਹਨ... ਆਪਣੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਰ ਉਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਮੁਗਲ ਸ਼ਹਿਨਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਰਜਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਇੰਨੀ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਿਨੀ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪਰਜਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰ ਹੈ।"

- ਅ) ਸੰਨ 1832 ਵਿਚ ਈਸਾਈਅਤ ਦਾ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਆਏ ਡਾ. ਜੋਜ਼ਫ਼ ਵੁਲਫ਼ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਫ਼ਰਨਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ : "The name of Ranjit Singh is a terror from Lahore to the city of Bokhara."¹⁴

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਨਾਂਉ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਤੋਂ ਬੁਖਾਰਾ ਤਕ ਇਕ ਹਊਆ ਬਣ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ।"

- ੲ) ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਆਦਿ ਕਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਰਡ ਡਲਹੌਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤਕ ਦੇ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਲਿਖਣ-ਛਾਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਜਾਨ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਮਾਰਸ਼ਮੈਨ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਤੀਜੇ ਭਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ : "He was the most extraordinary man of the age between Constantinople and Peking; and with the help of his forces and his lofty spirits of ambition, he would have founded another Empire in Hindustan had there been no treaty of Amritsar."¹⁵

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਉਹ, ਭਾਵ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਸਤੁਨਤੁਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਲੇ ਕੇ ਪੀਕਿੰਗ ਤਕ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਮਹਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਗ਼ੈਰਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਸਨ। ਜੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਦਨਾਮਾ (ਜੋ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੜੀ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰੀ ਤੇ ਬੇਇਤਬਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਨ 1809 ਵਿਚ ਤੈਅ ਕਰਵਾ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ) ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਰੋਕ ਨਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੈਨਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਸਦਕੇ, ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਨਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਦੇਣੀ ਸੀ।"

ਇਸ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਪੰਝੀ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਜੁਗਰਾਫ਼ੀਆਦਾਨ, ਜੀ. ਟੀ. ਵਾਈਨ, ਨੇ ਵੀ ਨਿੱਝੋਕ ਤਸਲੀਮ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਨ 1844 ਵਿਚ ਛਪ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਫ਼ਰਨਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

"If he had not been restrained by the gigantic power of the East India Company, Ranjit Singh would long ago have been seated on the throne of Delhi."¹⁶

"ਜੇ ਈਸਟ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਰਾਟ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੇਗ ਉੱਤੇ ਰੋਕ ਨਾ ਲਾ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਦੇ ਦੇ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ ਹੁੰਦੇ।"

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ, ਉਹ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਬਿਖੜੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿੰਨੀ ਕੁ ਵੀ ਸਲਤਨਤ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ ਸਨ, ਉਹ 'ਸਰਕਾਰ-ਏ-ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ' ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਤੇ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਇੰਨੀ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਤੇ ਮਕਬੂਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਤੇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਦਾ ਚਰਚਾ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਮੀਲ ਦੂਰ ਪਰਦੇਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਸਤੀ ਤੇ ਭਾਈਬੰਦੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਦੇਸ-ਪਰਦੇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਵਾੜੇ ਝੁਹੜੇ ਤੇ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦੇ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਆਪੋ-ਆਪਣੀ ਦੇਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਦਮ ਭਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ।

ਇਸ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਕੇਸਰੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਖ਼ੇਬਰ ਦੇ ਦਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਲਦਾਖ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਟੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਝੂਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ; ਇਸ ਦਾ 'ਨਾਨਕਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸਿੱਕਾ' ਦਰਿਆ ਕਾਬਲ ਤੋਂ ਦਰਿਆ ਸਤਿਲੁਜ਼ ਤਕ ਚਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ; ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਦੀ ਧਾਂਕ ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰਾਡੇ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਤੇ ਸਲਾਹੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਤੇਜ-ਪਰਤਾਪ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਅਬ-ਰਸੂਖ਼ ਮਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਜਣਹਾਰ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਦੇ ਉਕਤ ਐਲਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੀ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਭਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਜਨਰਲ ਸਰ ਜਾਨ ਗਾਰਡਨ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ, *The Sikhs*, ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

"The Sikhs had now reached nationhood under an able king fully equipped with confidence and energy, who, by transforming the Khalsa into a territorial power, decided once and for all whether the Sikh or the Afghan were to rule the Panjab. Thus, after a hundred years of unflinching struggle, was fulfilled the prophecy of the martial Guru Gobind Singh"¹⁷

ਅਰਥਾਤ "ਸਿੱਖ ਹੁਣ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਓਤਪੋਤ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਇਕ ਨੇਸ਼ਨ ਭਾਵ ਕੌਮ ਬਣ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਨ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਲਤਨਤੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਅੱਗੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਫ਼ਗਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ। ਯੇਧਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪੋਸ਼ੀਨਗੋਈ ਵੀ, ਇਉਂ, ਸੋ ਕੁ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਤੋੜ ਘਾਲ ਤੇ ਨਿਧੜਕ ਜਦੋਂਜਹਿਦ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਸੱਚੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੀ ਸੀ।"

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਜ-ਪਰਤਾਪ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਤੇ ਬਾਹੁ-ਬਲ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਦਸਣ-ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਜੇ ਹੋਏ 'ਖਾਲਸੇ' ਦੀ ਘਾਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ, ਆਪਣੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ 'ਸਰਕਾਰ-ਏ-ਖਾਲਸਾ' ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਆਖਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ 'ਦਰਬਾਰ-ਏ-ਖਾਲਸਾ' ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਮੁਹਰ ਅਤੇ ਝੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ 'ਅਕਾਲ ਸਹਾਇ' ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੀ ਲੇਜੰਡ (legend) ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਸੀ :

ਦੇਹੀ, ਤੇਹੀ, ਫਤਹ, ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇਦਰੰਗ,
ਯਾਫ਼ਤ ਅਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ।¹⁸

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਇਹ ਸਭ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਤੇ ਸਮਰਥਾ, ਰਾਜ ਤੇ ਭਾਗ, ਜਿੱਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਸਲ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ," ਭਾਵ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ, ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਵਰ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਸ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਦੇਣ ਹਨ।

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ਅਫ਼ਸੋਸ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਕਰ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋਏ ਜਾਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਕਾਰਨ, ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਚੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਉਕਤ ਜ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਬੇਮਿਸਾਲ ਅਸਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਤੋਂ ਘੇਰ ਨਾਵਾਕਫ਼ੀ ਹੈ; ਆਪਣੇ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਗੌਰਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਅਣਜਾਣਤਾ ਹੈ; ਆਪਣੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਉਕਤ ਅਦੁਤੀ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਦਕਾ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਜਿੱਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਬੇਖਬਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਬੇਖਬਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਗਭਰੂ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਿਆਰ-ਸਾਝ, ਮੰਦੇ ਭਾਗੀ, ਤੋੜ ਚੁਕੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿਰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ, ਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਫ਼ਖਰ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਬਰਾ ਹੀ ਮਾਨੇ ਮੁਕ-ਬੁਕ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਸੇ ਚੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲਦਾ, ਸੰਭਾਲਦਾ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਪਿਆਰ, ਮਾਣ, ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ ਦੇ ਵਲਵਲੇ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ ਮਾਰ ਰਹੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਤਾਂ, ਮੰਦੇ-ਭਾਗੀ, ਇਸ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਬੇਖਬਰ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ "ਕੇਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਹਨ" ਅਤੇ 'ਸਰਦਾਰੀ' ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਹੈ; ਨਾਲੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ, ਨਿਆਰੀ ਪਛਾਣ, ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਹਸਤੀ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਤੇ ਪਰਵਾਨਿਤ ਹੈ।

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬੇਖਬਰੀ, ਬੇਰੁਖੀ, ਬੇਮੁਖਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੂਪ-ਵਿਗਾੜ, ਭਾਵ ਖਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ, ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਪਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਵੇਸਲਾਪਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਢਿਲਿਆਈ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਪਰਵਾਹੀ, ਪੰਥਕ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਪਰਵਾਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਪਰਬੰਧਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਣਤਾਈ ਹੀ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸ਼ੇਕਮਈ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਧਣ, ਇਸ ਬੇਮੁਖ ਝੁਕਾਅ ਨੂੰ ਠੱਲ੍ਹਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਚਿੰਤਾਜਨਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਦੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਪਾਅ ਉਹੀਓਂ ਮੁਢੀਦ ਤੇ ਕਾਰਗਰ ਪਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਅਜ ਤੋਂ ਸਵਾ ਭੁ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹੀ ਅਧੋਗਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਧਾਰਨ ਤੇ ਉਦੇਕੀ ਘੇਰ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਤੀ ਸਿਆਣੇ, ਸੁਹਿਰਦ ਤੇ ਦੂਰਅੰਦੇਸ਼ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਰਤਣੇ ਆਰੰਭੇ ਸਨ।

ਸੰਨ 1849 ਵਿਚ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ ਦੀ ਖੁੰਝਾਈ ਕਰਕੇ ਛਾਈ ਨਿਰਾਸਤਾ ਤੇ ਛਾਂਵਾਡੇਲਤਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਧੜਾਧੜ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ-ਵੰਝਾਈ (ਦਾੜੀ-ਕੇਸ-ਕਟਾਈ, ਜੋ ਫਿਰ ਰੱਖ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨ ਕਰੇ) ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੁਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ, ਉਦੋਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਉਦੋਂ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਜਰਮਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਡਾ. ਅਰਨੈਸਟ ਟਰੰਪ ਨੇ, ਸੰਨ 1877 ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਨਿੱਕ ਲਿਖ-ਛਾਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ "Under British Rule, Sikhism is a waning religion that will soon belong to history"¹⁹ ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਇਕ ਖੈ-ਖੀਣ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਘਟਨਾ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।" ਇਕ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਨਾਥ ਭਟਾਚਾਰੀਆ, ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਨ 1896 ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਭਵਿੱਖਬਾਣੀ ਵੀ ਪਰਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ "Under the British Rule, Sikhism is fast losing its vitality and is drifting towards amalgamation with the Hindu faith."²⁰ ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੋ ਚੁਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਆਪਣੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਬੜੀ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਗੰਵਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਰਲ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਵਲ ਵਾਹੋ-ਦਾਹੀ ਠਿੱਲ੍ਹ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।"

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਘਾਤਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਠਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਾਰੂ ਖਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਜੇ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਧੁਰਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਤ੍ਰਿਬੈਲੀ — ਭਾਵ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ — ਨੂੰ ਮਿਥ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਪਾਵਨ ਧੁਰੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਵ-ਚੇਤਨਾ ਤੇ ਪੁਨਰ-ਜਾਗ੍ਰਤੀ (Awakening and renaissance) ਦੀ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਚਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਬਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਾਰ ਮੁੜ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਗੁਰ-ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਰਸੇ (heritage) ਵਲ ਮੋੜ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ, ਸਾਹਿਤ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ; ਅਰੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ, ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਲਿਪੀ, ਸਾਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਸ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ, ਸਿਦਕ, ਚਾਅ ਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਸੁਭਾਗੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੇ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ, ਰੁਸ਼ਨਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਵਿਕਸਾਇਆ, ਸੀ; ਪਿੰਡੋ-ਪਿੰਡ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੋ-ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਪਰਚਾਰਿਆ ਤੇ ਪਰਸਾਰਿਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਲਫਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਥਾਜ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਤੇ ਪਰਭਾਵ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਆਪ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਮਹਾਨ, ਵਿਆਪਕ ਤੇ ਦੂਰਦਰਸ਼ੀ ਉੱਦਮ ਨੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਇਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਹਲੂਣ ਕੇ ਰਖ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ; ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਵਿਰਸੇ, ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਉਤੇ ਨਾਜ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਤੀਖਣ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਘੇਰ ਨਿਰਾਸਤਾ ਤੇ ਢਹਿੰਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਆਸ਼ਾਵਾਦ ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਵੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੇਵਕ ਤੇ ਉਸਰਦੀਏ, ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ, ਦੇ ਲਫਜ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਉਂ ਲਛਣਾਈ ਤੇ ਅਪਣਾਈ ਗਈ ਸੀ :

'ਸਿੱਖੀ ਹੈ, ਬਲਵਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਨੂੰ,
ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਰਖਣਾ'।²¹

6

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਮੂਲਿਕ ਲੋੜ ਉਦੋਂ ਵੀ, ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਗੋਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਛਾਣ (ਸਨਾਖਤ ਜਾਂ identity) ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ, ਇਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਾਰਦਿਕ ਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਨਮਾਨ, ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਲਈ ਅਤਿਅੰਤ ਵਚਨਬੱਧਤਾ (commitment) ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਵਿਦ੍ਰੋਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਇਹ ਮਾਣ ਤੇ ਸਨਮਾਨ, ਵਚਨਬੱਧਤਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਸੋਮੇ ਅਤੇ ਪਰੇਰਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ (motivating force) ਬਣੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ। ਇਹ ਇਕ-ਦੂਜੇ ਲਈ ਪਰਸਪਰ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਅਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਕ (complementary and supplementary) ਵੀ ਬਣੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਤੱਖ ਪਛਾਣ ਵੀ ਇਹੇ ਸਨ, ਇਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਹੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ।

ਕਮਾਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਅਣਚਿਤਵਿਤ ਮਿਹਨਾਂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ-ਸ਼ੌਕਤ ਸਾਖ-ਸੋਭਾ ਦੁਆਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਜੋੜ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ, ਪੈਰਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਹੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਗਰੰਟੀ ਦਸ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਕੁ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ “ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮੇ” ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ :

1. ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੈ ਸੇਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੇਰਾ।
ਵਹ ਠਾਕੁਰ, ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ।²²
2. ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ,
ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ਼ ਦੀਓਂ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ।
ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪ੍ਰਨ ਕੀ ਚੀਤਿ,
ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰਉਂ ਦਿਨ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ।
3. ਰਹਿਤ ਰਹਤ ਸਮ ਸਿਖ ਜੇ
ਸੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੁਪਾਇ।
ਵਾ ਮੈਂ, ਮੈਂ ਮੈਂ, ਭੇਦ ਨਹਿੰ,
ਮਮ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੁਇ ਜਾਇ।²³

ਸੋ, ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਖਿਤਾਬ (ਭਾਵ ‘ਸਿੰਘ’) ਅਤੇ ਕੁਤਬੇ (ਭਾਵ ‘ਸਰਦਾਰੀ’) ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਨੀਆਂ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਪਰੇਕਤ ਹਦਾਇਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਨਿਯਤ ਉਪਰੇਕਤ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਤੋੜ ਦੇਣਗੇ, ਤਾਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਬਾਰ ਗੰਵਾ ਲੈਣਗੇ। ਰੱਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਇਉਂ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਬਾਰ ਗੰਵਾ ਲਿਆ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਉਹ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਪਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਚਿਹਰਾ-ਮੁਹਰਾ ਹੀ ਬਦਲ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਉਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਮੁਖ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਉਹ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਦਾਤ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਰਹੇਗੀ? ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ “ਸਮ-ਰੂਪ” ਅਤੇ “ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ” ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਦਾਅਵੇਦਾਰ ਉਹ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਣਗੇ? ਅਜਿਹਾ ਮਾਣ, ਸਥਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਨਮਾਨ, ਉਪਰ ਵਰਣਿਤ ਰਾਜ-ਭਾਗ, ਆਨ-ਸ਼ਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਰੁਆਬ ਤੇ ਰਸੂਖ ਆਦਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਣਗੇ?

ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਗਵਾਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਭ ਦੇ ਖ਼ੁਬ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਹੁਕਮ-ਅਦੂਲੀ ਤੇ ਵਾਹਿਦਾ-ਖ਼ਲਾਫ਼ੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੰਵਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਸੇ, ਇਸ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਮੁੰਦ ਲੈਣ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਖ ਮੇੜ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਕਰਾਰਾਂ (ਸਾਡੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿਓਂ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੇ) ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਉਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਗੌਰਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਕੇਵਲ ਖਜ਼ਲ-ਖੁਆਰੀ ਹੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਹੈ, ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਰਖਦੀ ਹੈ। ਚੇਤੇ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਥਾਰੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਮਬਰਦਾਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਸਾਡ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ :

ਰਹਿਤ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਹਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਹਾਵੈ,
ਰਹਿਤ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਦਰ ਚੇਟਾਂ ਖਾਵੈ।
ਰਹਿਤ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸੁਖ ਕਬਹੂ ਨਾ ਲਹੇ,
ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਸੁ ਵਿੜੁ ਕਰ ਗਹੇ।²⁴

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ਸਾਡੇ 'ਸਿੰਘ-ਸਭਾਈ' ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਹੋ ਕੁਝ ਦਸਣ ਤੇ ਦਰਿਤ ਕਰਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬਹੁ-ਮੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਕਮਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ, ਅਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਤੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਘਾਲਾਂ ਘਾਲ ਕੇ, ਥਾਂਉਂ-ਥਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ; ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ ਸਨ। ਫਿਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ, ਸਾਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਦਾ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਪੱਕਾ-ਪੀਛਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਪਾਸ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੱਚਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲਾਸਾਨੀ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਖਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਗੌਰਵ ਤੇ ਅਭਿਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਰਿਹਾ। ਸੰਨ 1947 ਦੇ ਘਲੂਘਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇਸ ਦੇ ਉਜਾੜੇ ਕਾਰਨ, ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੰਸਬਾਵਾਂ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਹਿ ਗਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਧਰ ਪੂਰਵੀਭਾਰਤੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ, ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਜਾਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅਦਾਰੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਲੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਮਧਰੀਕ ਸੈਕੂਲਰ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਜਾਂ ਅਪਣਾਏ 'ਸੈਕੂਲਰ' ਸਕੂਲਾਂ-ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਹੋਣੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਭੇਸ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸਕੂਲ, ਕਾਲਜ ਅਸਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਹੇਠ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਖੇ ਸਨ ਜਾਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣਾਏ-ਉਸਾਰੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਨੁੰ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਥੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਅਜਿਹੀ ਘੋਰ ਲਾਪਰਵਾਹੀ, ਕੋਤਾਹੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੌਤਾਹ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੁਣ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲਿਖ-ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਨਿਕਲ ਰਹੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਸ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਕੋਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਲਗਪਗ ਚੂਣੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਸਲੇ ਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਖੜ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ, ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਦਾਚਾਰਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ-ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਖਬਰ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਨਾਜ਼ ਕਰਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਰਿਹਾ, 'ਸੁਹਟੇ', 'ਸਮਾਰਟ' (smart) ਤੇ 'ਇਲਪਸੰਦ' ਆਦਿ ਬਣਨ-ਇਸਣ ਦੇ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਅਧੀਨ, ਅਨਮਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਮਨਮਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੀਸੇ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇਬੰਦ ਤਿਲਾਜਲੀ ਦੇਣ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਭਾਰੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਦਾ ਮਾਨੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਮੇਆ ਬਣ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

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ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਮੁੜ ਘਰ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ, ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਰਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਰਮ-ਈਮਾਨ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ, ਅਜਿਹੀ ਦੁਰਭਾਵਨਾ ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਤਕ ਅਭਿਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਝਲਣ-ਭਟਕਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਸ਼ੇਦਾਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਆਮ ਕਰਕੇ, ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਵਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਬੁਧੀਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ, ਆਪਣੇ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਉਕਤ

ਤਜਰਬਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਏ ਪੁਰਨਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਭ ਉਠਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਕਟ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੋਂ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਟਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਟਾਲਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਚੇ, ਛੇਤੀ-ਤੋਂ ਛੇਤੀ ਕਮਰਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ :

1. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭਾਈ' ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ ਦਾ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਕਰ-ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੀ-ਸੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ, ਰਹਿਤ-ਬਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੀ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਕਹਾਵਤ : ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਤੇ ਕੁਛਰ ਅਜ਼ ਕਾਅਬਾ ਬਰਖ਼ੇਜ਼ਦ, ਕੁਜ਼ਾ ਮਾਨਦ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀ? ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੇ ਕਾਅਬੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਕੁਛਰ ਸਿਰ ਚੁਕ ਲਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਾਤੀ ਵੈਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ, ਪੜੇਬੰਦੀ ਤੇ ਪਾਰਟੀਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਣਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣਾ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਘਿਰਣਾ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਮੁਖਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਠਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।
2. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨੇੜਤਾ, ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਖੜਦੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ-ਘਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨਾ, ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਘਟੇ-ਘਟ ਹਫ਼ਤਾਵਾਰੀ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੰਚਾਲਕ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ, ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ, ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਲਾਭਦਾਇਕਤਾ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਾਉਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਉਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੋਮੇ ਤੇ ਅਸਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ।

ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਿਨਾ
ਦੂਜੀ ਓਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਰਾਈ।²⁵

3. ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਜਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਹੇਠ ਚਲ ਰਹੇ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਤਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਗੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਹਰ ਕੀਮਤ ਤੇ, ਬਾਕਾਇਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਉਂਤਬਧ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਪੱਕਾ-ਪੀੜਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਨਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਦੇ ਪੰਜ ਸਕੂਲੀ-ਕਾਲਜੀ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਪੀਰੀਅਡ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਜਿਸਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਦੂਜੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਤੀਜੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ, ਚੌਥੇ ਦਿਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਦਿਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਾਕਾਇਦਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਲਸਲੇਵਾਰ ਲਿਖਾਈ-ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਆਦਿ ਲਈ ਲੁੜੀਦਾ ਥਾਨ੍ਹੂੰ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣਾ।
4. ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਯਹੂਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ, ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਮਾਨਸਕ, ਸਰੀਰਕ, ਸਦਾਚਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ-ਸਿੱਖਿਅਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਇਤਨਾ ਤਕੜਾ, ਨਰੋਆ, ਲਾਇਕ, ਸੰਤੁਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਨੂਠੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨਾਲ ਵਰੋਸਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਜਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਕਿ ਸਮਰਥ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਗ-ਸੰਗ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਿੱਠ ਤੇ ਹੈ, ਨਿਯਮਬਧ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੱਕਾਂ ਤਾਣ ਕੇ ਅਗੇ ਵਧਦੇ, ਭਰਪੂਰ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਾਤੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਦਾਨੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਕੌਮੀ ਤੇ ਪੰਥਕ ਆਨ-ਸ਼ਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਚਾਰ ਚੰਨ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਜਾਣ।
5. ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਆਣੇ ਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੇਵਲ ਜਨਮ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ (Sikh by Birth) ਹੋਣਾ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ (Sikh by Conviction) ਹੋਣਾ ਵੀ ਅਤੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ (committed) ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

6. ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਾਉਣਾ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਸੇ ਸਦਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਸ਼ਾਨ-ਸ਼ੌਕਤ, ਸ਼ਾਮ ਤੇ ਸੋਭਾ ਦੁਆਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਹਦਾਇਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਜੋੜ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ, ਪੈਰਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ।

— ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੈ ਸੇਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ।

ਵਹ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ।²⁶

— ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ।

ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ।

ਜਬ ਇਹੁ ਗਹੇ ਬਿਪ੍ਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ

ਮੈਂ ਨ ਕਰਉਂ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤ।²⁷

7. ਸਿੱਖ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਭੁੱਲਣ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਡਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਇਕ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਇਕੋ ਉਸੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਪਿਛਲੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੇ ਕੁਝ ਹਾਸਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਮਝ-ਸਮਝੌਂ, ਗਿਣਤੀ-ਮਿਣਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਣ-ਵਸਤੂ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਧਾਰੇ ਰਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਚਿਤ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਖਣ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਵਿਰਸਾ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਿੰਘਤਵ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ-ਸੋਭਾ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ-ਤਾਣ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਅਸਰ-ਰਸੂਖ ਅਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਤੇ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਉਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਤ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਗੋਂ ਵੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਜੇ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਭਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਦੇ-ਵੀ-ਨਾ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਏ ਸੰਕਟ (unprecedented crisis) ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਸਮਝ ਸਕੇ ਤਾਂ (ਰੱਖ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ)

ਨਾਂ ਸਮਝੋਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਟ ਜਾਓਗੇ, ਤੁਮ ਐ ਕਾਛਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ।

ਤੁਮਾਰਾ ਸਫ਼ਾਹਿ ਹਸਤੀ ਪਰ ਨਾਮ ਔਰ ਨਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾ ਹੋਗਾ।

8. ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਵੀ ਚੇਤੇ ਕਰਾਉਣੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਕਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਲਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ, ਹਦਾਇਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਕਤੀ ਤੌਰ, ਲੋੜ, ਲਹਿਰ ਜਾਂ ਪਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਵ ਮੁਗਲਦੀ ਕਾਲ, ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ, ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ। ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਨਾ ਇਹ ਆਰਜ਼ੀ (temporary) ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ (contemporary) ਸਮੇਂ, ਸਥਿਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਥਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਸਮਿਆਂ, ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ, ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਜਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਉਦੋਂ, ਭਾਵ ਸਤ੍ਹਾਰਵੀਂ-ਅਠਾਰ੍ਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ, ਪਰਸੰਗਕ (relevant), ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ (essential) ਅਤੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ (fundamental) ਸਨ, ਓਨੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਦੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਦੱਸੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੰਨੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੀਆਂ। ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਪੁੰਜ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ- ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਦੇ ਨਾਮ-ਲੇਖਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ-ਹਦਾਇਤਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰਖਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਇਹ ਉਦੋਂ ਵੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਸਨ, ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ, ਹੋਣ-ਲਿਖੇ ਗੁਰ-ਵਾਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਅਗੋਂ ਵੀ ਦਿਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਰਹਿਣਗੀਆਂ :

‘ਸਾਬਤ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ’।²⁸

ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਦੇਸ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਪਰਦੇਸ, ਗ਼ਮੀ ਵੇਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਦੀ ਸਮੇਂ, ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਖੇ, ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਾਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਭਾਵ ਨਿਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤੀ 'ਅਰਦਾਸ' ਵਿਚ, ਆਪਣੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਇਸ਼ਟ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਤ ਇਉਂ ਅਰਜ਼ਾਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ :

- ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸੀਸ ਦਿਤੀ...
ਧਰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਸੰਗ ਤੋੜ
ਨਿਭਾਈ, ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਕੇ, ਖਾਲਸਾ
ਜੀ ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ...
- ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾਨ, ਕੇਸ ਦਾਨ, ਰਹਿਤ ਦਾਨ, ਬਿਬੇਕ ਦਾਨ
... ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਜੇਕਾਰ, ਬੋਲੇ ਜੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ...।²⁹

ਇਹ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਅਮੋਲਕ ਦਾਤ, ਭਾਵ 'ਕੇਸ', ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਮੋਹਰ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਅਜ਼ੂਕ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ, ਵੱਡੀ ਤੇ ਉੱਘੜਵੀਂ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹਨ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਅਤੇ ਬਚਨ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਦੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਸ਼ਾਮਦੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਭਰਦੇ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲਘਟਾ ਕਥਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ' (ਸਿੱਖ-ਸਜਾ ਦਾ ਭਾਗੀ) ਵੀ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ :-

- ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੇਝੁ ਟਿਕੈ ਕੀ ਕਾਣ ਨ ਕਰੇ।
ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਜੇਝੁ ਟਿਕੈ 'ਕੇਸ' ਹੋਨਿ।
- ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਮੁਹਰ,
ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੀ ਜਾਣੇ।
- ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਦੀ...
ਪੂਜਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਕੀ, ਆਗਿਆ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਕੀ,
ਦੀਦਾਰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਕਾ।
- ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੇ ਚਿਹਰੇ ਦੇ ਰੋਮ ਕਟਾਏ,
ਸੇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ।
- ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਕਤਰੂ ਬੇਟੇ ਰਖੇ
ਸੇ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ।³⁰

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ, ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਹਰੂਰੀ ਕਵੀ, ਸੇਨਾਪਤਿ, ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ' ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਬਖਸ਼ਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਰ-ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ :

'ਹੁਕਾ ਨ ਪੀਵੈ, ਸੀਸ ਦਾੜੀ ਨਾ ਮੁੰਡਾਵੈ,
ਸੇ ਤੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ,
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ'।³¹

9. ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ, ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਿਹਨ-ਨਸ਼ੀਨ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ 'ਕੇਸ' ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਮੁਹਰ-ਛਾਪ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਾਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਜਿਥੇ ਆਪ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਸਨ ਉਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਇਕੋ-ਇਕ ਅਭਿਨਾਸੀ ਗੁਰੂ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ, ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੇ ਮਹਾਂਵਾਕ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਇਸੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਬਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹਨ :

ਤੇਰੇ ਥੰਕੇ ਲੋਇਣ, ਦੰਤ ਰੀਸਾਲਾ ॥
ਸੋਹਣੇ ਨਕ, ਜਿਨ ਲੰਮੜੇ ਵਾਲਾ ॥³²

ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਤਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਸੁਨਖੇ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਰੱਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੇ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪਕ ਰਜਾ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਹੁਸੀਨ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਚਮਤਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਸਦ-ਜੀਵੀ ਉਪਜ ਹਨ। ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ, ਹਰ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਨਸਲ ਦੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ — ਮਰਦ, ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ, ਬੱਚਾ — ਨੂੰ ਮੁਢ ਕਦੀਮ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਈ ਇਕ ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਦਾਤ ਅਤੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਹਨ। ਜਿਥੇ ਤਕ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ-ਮੁਛਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਰਦ ਜਾਮੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਰਦਉਪਣੇ ਵੀ, ਜਵਾਮਰਦ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ, ਸਦੀਵੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਯੁਕਤੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਹਨ।

ਇਉਂ ਇਹ ਤਿੰਨੇ ਦਾਤਾਂ-ਸਿਰ ਉਤੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਉਪਰ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਤੇ ਮੁਛਾਂ -ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਾਵਨ ਦੇਣ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਮੋਲਕ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਤ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਉਤਾਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਜਾਗਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਮੁੰਨਣ-ਮੁਛਣ ਜਾਂ ਛਾਂਗਣ-ਮਰੋੜਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਏ, ਪਾਵਨ ਹੁਕਮ ਤੇ ਰਜਾ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਹੁਕਮ-ਅਦੂਲੀ ਵੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ-ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਹੁਕਮ-ਅਦੂਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਗਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਇਉਂ ਆਢਾ ਲਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਮੂੰਹ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਸਵੇ-ਆਏ ਵਾਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਛਣ-ਮੁਛਣ ਜਾਂ ਛਾਂਟਣ-ਛਾਂਗਣ ਤੋਂ ਹੁਕਮਨ ਵਰਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਇਉਂ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਰਜਾ ਉਤੇ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਉਕਤ ਪੱਕੀ-ਪੀੜੀ ਹਦਾਇਤ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਨਾਲ ਹੀ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਕਰਮਾਤੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਦੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਵੀ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ, ਸੋਨੇ ਉਤੇ ਸੁਹਾਗੇ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਕਤ ਹੁਕਮ-ਹਦਾਇਤ ਦੀ ਤਾਮੀਲ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਰਜਾ ਉਤੇ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਨਿਤ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਜਾਗਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਜੀ ਆਇਆ' ਆਖਦੇ, ਸੰਵਾਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਸਿੰਗਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਗੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਜੇਦੜੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ :

‘ਹੇ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ : ਸਿੱਖੀ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਸੰਗ ਨਿਭੇ’।

ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਇਥੋਂ ਚਲਾਏ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਆਪਣਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਮੁਖੜਾ ਵਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਸੁਰਖਰੂ ਹੋ ਸਕਣ।

10. ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜੁਆਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਦਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਵਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ‘ਸਿੱਖ’, ‘ਸਿੰਘ’ ਅਤੇ ‘ਸਰਦਾਰ’ ਆਖੇ-ਅਖਵਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ-ਅਧਿਕਾਰ; ਉਸ ਦੀ ਉਚਿਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ; ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਨਿਆਰੋਪਨ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ, ਪਛਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਕਸਵੱਟੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਹੋ ਕੇਸ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਤੇ ਮੁਛਾਂ ਹੀ ਹਨ; ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ, ਭਾਵ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ, ਦੇਸ ਜਾਂ ਪਰਦੇਸ ਵਿਚਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਨਾਵਾਕਫ਼ ਬੰਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੇ ਹਸਤੀ, ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਣੀ ਤੇ ਉਪਾਧੀ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸਿੱਖ ਜਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ’ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਕੋਈ ‘ਕੇਸ-ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਤੇ ਮੁਛਾਂ-ਹੀਨ’ ਸਜਣ, ‘ਹਿੰਦੂ’ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ‘ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ’ ਵੀ, ‘ਜੈਨੀ’ ਵੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ‘ਬੋਧੀ’ ਵੀ, ‘ਈਸਾਈ ਵੀ’ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ‘ਯਹੂਦੀ’ ਵੀ, ਇਤਿਆਦਕ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਐਨ ਉਲਟ, ਕੇਸ-ਦਾਹੜੀ-ਮੁਛਾ-ਸਧਿਤ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸੱਜਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ‘ਸਿੱਖ’ ਹੋਣ ਸਬੰਧੀ, ਓਪਰੀ ਨਜ਼ਰੇ ਵੀ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਜਾਂ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਪੈ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਦੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪੱਛਮੀ ਦੇਸਾਂ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਵਿਚ ਸਜੇ ਹੋਏ ‘ਗੋਰੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ’ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਦਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਮੁਛਾਂ-ਦਾਹੜੀਆਂ ਸਦਕੇ ਹੀ, ਕਰੋੜਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੇ ਉਸੇ ਨਸਲ ਅਤੇ

ਰੰਗ-ਢੰਗ ਵਾਲੇ 'ਈਸਾਈ ਤੇ ਯਹੂਦੀ ਗੋਰਿਆਂ' ਆਦਿ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਦਿਸ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਦੂਰੋਂ ਹੀ 'ਸਿੱਖ' ਜਾਂ 'ਸਿੰਘ' ਜਾਂ 'ਸਰਦਾਰ' ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣੇ-ਪਛਾਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਦੇ-ਬੁਲਾਏ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹੋ ਹਾਲ 'ਗੁਰ-ਨਿਵਾਸੀਆਂ' ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੋਰੀਆਂ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਕੇਸਕੀ ਤੇ 'ਦੁਪਟੇ' ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਸੁਹਣੇ ਤੇ ਸਵਛ ਸਿੱਖ-ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਰੱਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਜੇ ਉਹ ਕਦੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਈ ਭੁੱਲੜ ਦੇਸ ਜਾਂ ਪਰਦੇਸ-ਵਾਸੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ, ਆਪਣੀ ਉਕਤ ਮੁਹਰ-ਛਾਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ-ਸ਼ਨਾਖਤ ਤਿਆਗ ਦੇਣ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਮੁੜ 'ਈਸਾਈ', 'ਯਹੂਦੀ' ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਤਾਂ ਆਖ-ਅਖਵਾ ਸਕਣਗੇ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਾਂ ਸਰਦਾਰ' ਕਦਾਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਖੇ-ਅਖਵਾਏ ਜਾਂ ਦਸੈ-ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਣਗੇ। ਇਉਂ ਹੀ, ਗੋਰੀਆਂ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਵੀ, ਉਸ ਮੰਦ-ਭਾਗੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ, "ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖਣੀਆਂ, ਸਿੰਘਣੀਆਂ ਅਖਵਾ ਸਰਦਾਰਨੀਆਂ" ਨਹੀਂ ਦਸੀਆਂ, ਆਖੀਆਂ, ਜਾਣੀਆਂ, ਮੰਨੀਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਣਗੀਆਂ।

11. ਇਸੇ ਪਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ, ਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਜੇ ਦੇਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ, ਗੋਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਣਕ-ਫੰਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਜੋਕੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ, ਇਸ ਗੱਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਉਹ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਿਤ ਕਰਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਬਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ (ਰੱਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ) ਉਤਾਰ ਦੇਣਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਵਜੋਂ, ਹਿੰਦ ਮਹਾਂਸਾਗਰ, ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਮਹਾਂਸਾਗਰ ਜਾਂ ਐਟਲਾਂਟਿਕ ਮਹਾਂਸਾਗਰ ਆਦਿ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਗਹਿਰਾਈਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਣਗਿਣਤ ਬੂੰਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਗਿਣਵੀਆਂ ਬੂੰਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਮ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਮਾਈ, ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਨਾਲ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਗਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ-ਸੋਭਾ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਰ-ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵਾਧਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣਾ, ਤਿਵੇਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਬਧੀ ਕੇਸ-ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ-ਹੀਨ ਵੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਗੇਟਵੇ ਕੇਸ-ਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਉਂ ਖਪ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ-ਮਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਫਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਏਗਾ, ਪਰ ਉਹ, ਮੰਦੇ-ਭਾਗੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਵਖਰੀ ਹੋਂਦ, ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਹਸਤੀ, ਸਿੰਘਤਵ, ਨਿਆਰਾਪਨ, ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ, ਆਨ, ਸ਼ਾਨ, ਮਾਨ ਅਤੇ "ਸਰਦਾਰੀ" ਆਦਿ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਆਪੇ ਮੁਕਾਅ-ਮਿਟਾਅ ਦੇਣਗੇ। ਫਿਰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਦੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਅਧੋਗਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖ ਕੇ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਨੁਯਾਈ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਜੋ ਕਦੇ ਬੜੇ ਅਰਮਾਨਾਂ-ਭਰੇ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਸਾਡੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ (ਰੱਬ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ) ਇਉਂ ਆਖਣ ਦੀ ਖੋਚਲ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ :

ਬੜੇ ਸ਼ੈਕ ਸੇ ਸੁਨ ਰਹਾ ਥਾ ਜ਼ਮਾਨਾ,
ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਸੇ ਗਏ ਦਾਸਤਾਂ ਕਹਿਤੇ ਕਹਿਤੇ।

12. ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜੁਆਨ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕਸੁਰਤਾ (harmony) ਅਤੇ ਇਕਰੂਪਤਾ (uniformity) ਦੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਰਖਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਉਣਾ ਅਤੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਏਲਾਨੀਆਂ ਬਿਆਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਅਟੱਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਹੈ :-

— ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਪੈ, ਅਨੇਕ ਕੇ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਉ ਹੈ।³³

— ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ, ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੈ।³⁴

ਉਹ ਤਾਂ,

"ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ, ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ"³⁵

ਦਾ ਮੁੱਢੋਂ ਹੀ ਕਾਇਲ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ ਜੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਕਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਨਾਅਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਜਾਂ ਤਿਲਾਜਲੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਦ-ਹਸਤੀ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮਾਈਵੀ ਰੁਚੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਇਕਮਿਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਕਰੂਪਤਾ ਨੂੰ, ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਦੂਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਸਲਾਮ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ :

‘ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਰਬੋਂ ਵੀ ਆਖੇ;
‘ਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਚੌੜੇਪਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਰਲ ਜਾ’
ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਰਲਾਂ,
ਵਖ ਹੀ ਖਲਾਂ’ ।³⁶

ਪਿਛਲੀ ਚੋਤਨਾ ਤੇ ਜਾਗਰਤੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਭਾ, ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਜ ਤੋਂ 70 ਭ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅੰਤਰ-ਆਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਝੰਜੋੜਦਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਤੇ ਸਵੈ-ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਵੰਗਾਰਦਿਆਂ, ਬੜੇ ਸਾਫ਼-ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

ਇਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਨਾ ਲਾਈਂ ਚਾਅ ਤੂੰ,
ਇਕ ਹੋਣ ਥੀਂ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਆਪ ਹੁਣ ਤੰਗ ਹੈ ।
‘ਇਹ ਤਾਰੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਸਾਰੇ,
ਬਾਗ਼ ਬਾਗ਼, ਫੁੱਲੋਂ ਫੁੱਲੋਂ ਵੇਨ ਵੇਨ ਦੇ,
ਇਕ ਹੋਣ ਵਿਚ ਦਸ ਕੀ ਸਵਾਦ ਹੈ?
ਬੂੰਹ-ਬੂੰਹ, ਹੋ ਹੋ,
ਕਿਹਾ ਸੁਹੱਪਣ ਰੱਖੀ ਪਿਆ ਨਿਖਰਦਾ ।
ਮੋਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਣਕੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਵਧ ਦਿਸਣ,
ਚਮਕ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਰ ਹੈ ।
ਡਲੁਕ ਹੀਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ
ਆਬ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ
ਓ ਸੋਹਣਿਆਂ, ਮੁੱਲ ਪਾ ਤੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ।...’³⁷

ਹਰ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਡਰ-ਭੈ, ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਥਾਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੋੜਦਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਦ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਰੀ ਹਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਪਰੇਰਦਿਆਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ :

ਨਿਮੇਸ਼ੁਣ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਲਾ ਹੋਵੇ,
ਮਾਯੂਸ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੁੱਤੀ;
ਨਿਰਾਸ ਤੇਰੇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਣ,
ਚਸਮਾ ਫੁਟਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਜਵਾਨੀ ਦਾ ।
ਸਦਾ ਦੀ ਬਸੰਤ ਤੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਸੋਹਣਿਆ ।...
ਗੰਦਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਤੇ ਬੈਠਾ ਝੂਮ,
ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਣ ਦਾ ਖਿੱਚ ਪਰਤ ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਥੀਂ ।
ਹੇਟੀ ਪੁੱਟ ਮਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਢੇਲੇ ਤੋਂ,
ਫੇਲ ਫੇਲ ਧਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਹ ਤੂੰ,
ਜੀ ਤੂੰ ਸਜਕੇ, ਕੁਲ ਜਹਾਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ,
ਹਸ ਤੂੰ ਫੁੱਲਾਂ ।...
ਸੁਹਣਿਆਂ ! ਮੁੱਲ ਪਾ ਤੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ...’³⁸

ਇਸੇ ਸਿਲਸਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਜੋ ਹੋਕਾ ਕਲਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਅਖਬਾਰ, 'ਸਟੇਟਸਮੈਨ', ਦੇ ਇਕ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਐਡੀਟਰ, ਈਅਨ ਸਟੀਫਨਜ਼, ਨੇ 13 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1948 ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੈਰਵੀ ਤੇ ਪਹਿਰੇਦਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਪਰੇਰਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਫੈਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੇ ਭੈੜ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਵਾਰਣ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਣਾ ਵੀ ਬੜਾ ਲਾਭਦਾਇਕ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਕਿਵੇਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ, ਸੰਨ 1947 ਵਿਚ, ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ-ਬਾਧੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਤੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਘਾਲਾਂ ਘਾਲ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਲਈ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਮਿਲਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰਗਵਾਸ ਜਾਂ ਬਰਬਾਦ ਤੇ ਬੇਘਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਦੇਸ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਾਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਲਾਘਾ ਤੇ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਤਿ ਲੁੜੀਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਤੇ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਲਿਖਣ-ਛਾਪਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਸੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਬਦਗੋਈ ਤੇ ਬਦਨਾਮੀ-ਭਰਿਆ ਭੰਡੀ-ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਏ ਸਨ। ਅਜੇਹੀ ਸ਼ੋਕਮਈ ਤੇ ਹਿਰਦਾਵੇਧਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ, ਬਹੁਤ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ, ਕੇਵਲ ਉਕਤ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਐਡੀਟਰ ਹੀ ਸੱਚ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚ ਆਖ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਰਦਿਕ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਤੇ ਹੱਲਾਸ਼ੇਰੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਲਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ, ਰੀਟਾਇਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਵਾਪਿਸ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਜਾਣ ਲਗਿਆਂ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਦੇ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਰੋਪੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ, ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਵਜੋਂ, ਸਮੂਹ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ : 'ਮੈਂ ਕਈ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਇਕੱਠਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਰੇਗਰਾਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਖ਼ਬਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਲਿਖਦਾ-ਛਾਪਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ ਪਰ ਅਜ ਜਿਸ ਇਕੱਠ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਰੌਣਕ ਤੇ ਰੰਗੀਨੀ, ਸ਼ਾਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ੋਭਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਮਰਦਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰੰਗ-ਬਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਪੱਗੜੀਆਂ, ਤੀਵੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵੰਨ-ਸੁਵੰਨੇ ਦੁਪਟੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਂਸਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੰਗ-ਬਰੰਗੇ ਪਟਕੇ ਵੇਖ ਵੇਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਮਨਮੋਹਣੇ ਬਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ ਜੋ ਥਾਉ-ਥਾਂ ਰੰਗ-ਬਰੰਗੇ ਭੁੱਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਸ ਤੇ ਰੰਗੀਨੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੁਰੰਧਿਤ ਲਪਟਾਂ ਛੱਡ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਅਜ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਆਪੋ-ਆਪਣੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰਮੁਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ, ਇਕਸਾਰਤਾ (uniformity) ਦੇ ਸਾਗਰ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਰੀਆਂ ਲਾਉਣ ਲਗ ਪਏ ਹਨ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਗ਼ ਦੀ ਰੰਗੀਨੀ, ਅਤੇ ਵੰਨ-ਸੁਵੰਨਤਾ ਦਿਨੋ-ਦਿਨ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਚ ਜਾਂ ਲੋਚ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਕੇ, ਕਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਲੋਭ ਜਾਂ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਰੰਗ-ਬਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਪੱਗੜੀਆਂ, ਦੁਪਟੇ ਤੇ ਪਟਕੇ ਉਤਾਰ ਨ ਦੇਣੇ। ਸਚ ਜਾਨਣਾ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬਜ਼ਰ ਭੁੱਲ, ਭੁਲੇਖੇ, ਲੋਭ ਜਾਂ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਬਾਗ਼ ਵੀਰਾਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਏਗਾ, ਇਸਦੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ-ਖੂੰਹਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਰੌਣਕ (elegance), ਰੰਗੀਨੀ (colourfulness) ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਿੰਨਤਾ (diverseness) ਰੱਖ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਏਗੀ; ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਿਆਰੇਪਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਤੇ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਦਾ ਵੀ, ਰੱਖ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਭੇਗ ਪੈ ਜਾਏਗਾ। ਬਸ, ਇਹੋ ਮੇਰੀ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਪੀਲ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹੋ ਕਹਿ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ-ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਵਿਚਾਅ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ।"³⁹

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ਜੇ, ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਬਰੀਦੇ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਬਾਗ਼ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਅਲੌਕਿਕ ਰੰਗੀਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਰੇਪਨ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੁਟਿਆਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੀ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਹਾਨ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਕਤ ਹੁਕਮ-ਹਦਾਇਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਆਪਣੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਛਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਲਾਅਨਤ ਤੋਂ

ਬਚਾਉਣ; ਕੇਵਲ 'ਜਨਮ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ' (Sikh by Birth) ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ 'ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਦੇ ਬਚਨ-ਬੱਧ' ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ (Sikh by conviction and commitment) ਹੋ ਕੇ ਵਿਚਰਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਤੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਹਾਰਦਿਕ ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ; ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਨ ਤੇ ਆਭਾ ਵਧਾਇਆ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੇ-ਤੋਂ-ਅਗੇ ਉਸੇ ਸਾਬਤ, ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਸ਼ਕਲ-ਸੂਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਤੋਰਦੇ ਜਾਣ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਓ-ਦਾਦੇ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਕ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ ਹੈ।

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ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਨਾਖਤ ਤੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਫੁਲਵਾੜੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਵਖ ਵਖ ਸੰਪਰਦਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੰਤ-ਸਭਾਵਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ, ਅਤੇ ਉਰਾਰ-ਪਾਰ ਖਿੰਡੇ ਹੋਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਮਲੇਵਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਖ ਧਾਰਾ (main stream) ਨਾਲ ਮੁੜ ਜੋੜਨਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਉਂ ਹੀ, ਕੁਝ ਵਕਤੀ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ, ਲੋੜਾਂ, ਫੈਸਲਿਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਰਭਾਵਾਂ ਅਧੀਨ ਪਤਿਤ ਜਾਂ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ-ਕੇਸ-ਹੀਨ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ, ਕੇਸ-ਫੰਗਾਈ ਕਰਵਾ ਚੁਕੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ "ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਆਉਣਾ" ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਬੜਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਹੈ।

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੀ ਪਾਵਨ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ 'ਸਹਜਿਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ' ਆਖਣ-ਅਖਵਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਰਦਿਕ ਮਾਣ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਭਰਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸਾਕ-ਸੰਬੰਧੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਤੇ ਦਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਵਾਏ 'ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ' ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮੁਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨਾ, ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਅਨਿੱਖੜਵੇਂ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾਗੀ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਲਈ ਜੋ ਤੌਰ-ਤਰੀਕੇ ਵਰਤਣੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਵਧ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਤੇ ਸੁਖਾਵੇਂ, ਸਚਾਵੇਂ, ਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੇ, ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ, ਪਿਆਰ-ਤੇ-ਸਤਿਕਾਰ-ਪੂਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਲਾਗ ਤੇ ਨੇਕਨੀਤ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਹੋਣੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸੁਭਾਗੀ ਪਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿਰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਿਰਣਾ, ਮੰਦ-ਭਾਵਨਾ, ਮਿਹਣੇ-ਤਾਅਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੀ ਵੱਡਪਣ ਜਾਂ ਛੁੱਟਪੁਟੇ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਸਾਸਾਂ (superiority or inferiority complexes) ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਫ਼ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ-ਤੇ-ਪਰਚਾਰ-ਵੰਗ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਸੰਚਾਲਕ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ, ਦੇ ਪਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਪੂਰਨਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਸਹੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ; ਕੁਝ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੀ ਲੋਕੋਕਤੀ ਵਿਚ, ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੰਧਰਬ ਵਿਚ, ਇਉਂ ਸੰਕੇਤਿਤ ਹੈ :

‘ਕਾਣੇ’ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ‘ਕਾਣਾ’ ਕਹੀਏ,

ਕੋਲ ਲਈਏ ਸਦ।

ਪਾਸ ਬਹਾ ਕੇ ਪੁਛੀਏ ਵੀਰਾ

“ਕਿਵੇਂ ਗੰਢਾਈਆ ਅੱਖ?”⁴⁰

ਇਹ ਤੌਰ-ਤਰੀਕਾ, ਦੇਸ-ਪਰਦੇਸ ਵਿਚਰਦਿਆਂ, ਮੈਂ ਆਪ ਵੀ, ਗੁਰੂ-ਆਸਰੇ, ਕਈ ਮੌਕਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਵਰਤ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਅਪਾਰ ਮਿਹਰ ਸਦਕੇ ਇਹ, ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ, ਸਫਲ ਸਿਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

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ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਮੇਰਾ ਦਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਿਦਕੀ ਜਤਨ ਤੇ ਉਪਾਅ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੀ ਭੇੜ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਸਫਲ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਇਸ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਫ਼ਿਲਾਸਫ਼ਰ-ਸ਼ਾਇਰ, ਡਾ. ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਇਕਬਾਲ, ਦੇ ਹੇਠ-ਲਿਖੇ ਉਸ

ਆਸ਼ਾਵਾਦੀ ਬਚਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਜਾਪਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਦੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ, ਇਉਂ ਕਾਨੀਬੰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ :

ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਨਾਉਮੀਦ ਇਕਥਾਲ ਅਪਨੀ ਕਿਸਤੇ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਸੇ,
ਜ਼ਰਾ ਨਮ ਹੋ ਤੇ ਜਿਹ ਮਿਟੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਜਰਖੇਜ਼ ਹੈ ਸਾਕੀ।⁴¹

ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਖੀਂ-ਡਿਠੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਲਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ-ਕਲਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰਖਦਿਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਯਕੀਨਨ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਾਊ 'ਜ਼ਮੀਨ' ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ ਦਾ ਸਦ-ਰਹਿਣਾ 'ਵਤਰ' ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਵਨ ਸੰਚਾਲਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਖੇ ਰਖਣ ਨਾਲ, ਭਰਪੂਰ 'ਫ਼ਸਲਾਂ' ਦੀ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਸਹਿ ਤੇ ਅਕਹਿ ਕਸ਼ਟ ਸਹਾਰਦੇ ਅਨੁਾਰਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੂਰਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਲੋਕੋਕਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਦਰ ਤੇ :

ਮਾਂਨੂੰ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਦਾਤਰੀ,
ਅਸੀਂ ਮੰਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਸੇਏ।
ਜਿਉਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵਢਦਾ,
ਅਸੀਂ ਦੂਣ ਸਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ।⁴²

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ਇਕ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ ਤੇ ਬਸ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਸੰਚਾਲਿਤ ਇਹ ਪਾਵਨ ਧਰਮ ਹੁਣ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਧਰਮ (Global Religion) ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇ ਲਗਧਗ ਸਭ ਵੀਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫੈਲ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੀ 'ਜ਼ਮੀਨ' ਨੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਉਪਜਾਊ ਤੇ ਪਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ; ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਮੀ ਜਜ਼ਬੇ ਤੇ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ; ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਕਤਾ, ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਕਸਾਰਤਾ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਉਕਤ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪਛਾਣ (ਭਾਵ ਕੇਸ-ਧਾਰੀਤਾ) ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਸੋਮੇ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ, ਦੀ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਨਾਲੇ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ 'ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ' ਅਤੇ ਉਸਰ-ਪਸਰ ਰਹੀ 'ਪਨੀਰੀ' ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਵਥਾਅ ਦਾ ਭੁਲ-ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਵਨ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਲਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇਣ ਨਾਲ, ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸੀਰਾਜ਼ਾ ਬਿਖਰ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਖੜੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਏਗੀ। ਨਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਅਮੀਰ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਰਖੇਜ਼ (ਉਪਜਾਊ) ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦਾ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਵਤਰ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਸੇ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਿਨਾਂ 'ਸੋਕੇ' ਤੇ 'ਸ਼ੋਰੇ' ਦੀ ਲਪੇਟ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਤੌਖਲਾ ਵੀ ਬਣਿਆ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਨਾਮ-ਲੇਵਿਆਂ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ, ਲਈ ਵਧ-ਤੋਂ-ਵਧ ਜਾਣਕਾਰ, ਖ਼ਬਰਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਤਿਆਰ-ਬਰ-ਤਿਆਰ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਅਤੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਬੜੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਹਮਦਰਦ ਭੌਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ, ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਨੋਇਲ ਕਿੰਗ, ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜੇਕੇ ਹੀ ਇਉਂ ਆਖਿਆ ਹੈ :

Sikhism should not sit around and be overtaken by the outside world and by misunderstanding... She has to have everyone of her own people and well-wisher well informed. The ignorant are not enemies, but Sikhs must not miss a single chance to tell others the truth about their religion.⁴³

ਅਰਥਾਤ, "ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਵੇਸਲੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਬੈਠ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ, ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਕਦੇ ਇਹ ਨ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਗਲਤਫ਼ਹਿਮੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਤੇ ਮਲਕੜੇ ਹੀ ਘੇਰ ਕੇ ਦਬੋਚ ਲਵੇ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ

ਨਾਮਲੇਵਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਭਇਛਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਣਕਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਬੜਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਅਣਜਾਣ ਲੋਕ ਵੇਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਰਦੇ; ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਦਸਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਮੌਕਾ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਖੁੰਝਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ।"

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ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ

ਡਾ. ਬਲਕਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਹਰੇਕ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੈ, ਉਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਸੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਕਾਫੀ ਉਲਝਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਹੀ ਮੁਹਾਵਰਾ ਸਿਖ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਭੁਲਦੇ ਵੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਛੱਡਦੇ ਵੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਗੋਲਡਨ ਟੈਪਲ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ "ਸਿਖ ਚਰਚ" ਵਜੋਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ APOSTASY ਦੇ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਵਜੋਂ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਜਾਣ ਬੁੱਝੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਧਰਮ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਹੈ। ਇਸਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਭਗੋੜਾ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੇ ਇਹ ਅਰਥ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਕਸੌਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਖੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਪੱਛਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨਿਰਸੰਦੇਹ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਮਾੜਾ ਜਾਂ ਅਸਿਹਤਮੰਦ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਭਗੋੜੇ (RELIGIOUS DESERTER) ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਵਾਨਤ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਛੱਡ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਂ ਜੋ ਨਾਸਤਿਕ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਾ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ, ਭਗਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ —

ਜੇ ਨ ਭਜੇਤੇ ਨਾਰਾਇਣਾ ॥

ਤਿਨਕਾ ਮੈ ਨ ਕਰਉ ਦਰਸਨਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

(ਪੰਨਾ 1163)

ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਖੰਡੀ, ਨਾਸਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਫ਼ਰ ਨੂੰ, ਜੇ ਉਹ ਸਿਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤ ਕੋਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਪੱਛਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਕ (HERETICS) ਸ਼ਬਦ APOSTASY ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਈਸਾਈਅਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਛੱਡਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਘਟ ਅਪਰਾਧ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।² ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ "ਛੇਡੀਲੇ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ..." (ਮ. 1, ਪੰਨਾ 471) ਅਤੇ "ਛੇਡਹੁ ਕਪਟੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਰਵੈਰਾ..." (ਮ. 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1220) ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਸਾਬਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਪਟ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਪਾਖੰਡੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਸੂਰ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਖਰੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੂਰ ਹੈ। ਪੱਛਮੀ ਧਰਮ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਧਰਮ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ ਦੂਜਾ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਭਗੋੜਾ ਸਮਝਕੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਭਗੋੜੇ (NATIONAL APOSTASY) ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਅਹਿਦਨਾਮੇ (OLD TESTAMENT) ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਯਹੂਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਮੀ ਭਗੋੜੇ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਮਜਬੂਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਯਤਨ ਇਸਲਾਮੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਰੋਗਦੇ ਖੜੇ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਨਾ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸਲਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਛੱਡਣ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ, ਮੌਤ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੀ ਸੀ।³ ਜੇਤੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹਾਕਮ, ਹਾਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਹਿਕੂਮ ਨੂੰ

* ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾਹਿਬ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ।

ਇਸਲਾਮ ਅਤੇ ਮੌਤ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਕਬੂਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਤੇ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਧਰਮ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ ਮਾਡਲ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਝੁਕਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ, ਜਿਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਖ ਲਈ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਮਰ ਜਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਮੌਤ ਨੂੰ ਗਲਵਕਤੀ ਪਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਅਖਵਾਏ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਬੋਲਾ ਸਿਖ ਕੌਮ ਅੰਦਰ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ :

"ਸਿਰ ਜਾਏ ਤੇ ਜਾਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਨਾ ਜਾਏ"

ਅਤੇ 'ਪੰਥ ਵਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਉਜੜਾ ਮਨ ਚਾਉ ਘਨੇਰਾ"

ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਲਈ ਮਰ ਮਿਟਣ ਦੇ ਜਜ਼ਬੇ ਦੀ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਥੋਂ ਸ਼ਾਹਦੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਖ ਮਾਰਗ ਆਰੰਭ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ, ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਖੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ (ਗਵਾਹੀ) ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪੰਚਮ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਪਿਰਤ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਰਖੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਨੀਂਹ ਉੱਤੇ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ-ਮਹਿਲ ਉਸਾਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮਹਿਲ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਅੱਜ ਤਕ ਕਰਦੇ ਚਲੇ ਆ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਨੁਕਤਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਤਿਤ ਸਿਖ, ਪਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਸਿਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਤਿਤ ਮਾਰਗ ਉੱਤੇ ਤੁਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ, ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ ਸੁਝਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪੰਥਕ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਕਰਵਾਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਸਿਰਜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਨਵਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ ਭਾਈ ਮਤੀ ਦਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਸਤੀ ਦਾਸ ਨੇ ਨੌਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਦੀ ਨਦਰ ਹੇਠ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਕਰਵਾਕੇ ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਦਕ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਸੰਗ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਸਿਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਅਮਲੀ ਬੋਲਬਾਲੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਭਾਈ ਤਾਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਕਰ ਵਿਖਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਏਸੇ ਲਈ ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਰਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿਖ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਥਕ ਰਹਿਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਕ ਸਿਧ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ। ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਣੀ ਆਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਆਮ ਰਹਿਣੀ, ਕ੍ਰਿਤ, ਵਿਰਤ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੋਵੇ।¹ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਇਹ ਹੈ :

ੳ) ਇਕ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਦੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ।

ਅ) ਆਪਣੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਦਾਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ਼ਟ ਕੇਵਲ ਦਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਦਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ।

ੲ) ਦਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਜੇਤ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਇਕੋ ਰੂਪ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੰਨਣਾ।

ਸ) ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ, ਛੂਤ-ਛਾਤ, ਜੰਤ੍ਰ-ਮੰਤ੍ਰ-ਤੰਤ੍ਰ, ਸ਼ਗਨ, ਤਿੱਥ, ਮਹੂਰਤ, ਗੁਹਿ ਰਾਸ਼, ਸ਼ਰਾਧ, ਪਿੱਤਰ, ਖਿਆਹ, ਪਿੰਡ, ਪੱਤਲ, ਦੀਵਾ, ਕਿਰਿਆ ਕਰਮ, ਹੋਮ, ਜੱਗ, ਤਰਪਣ, ਸਿੱਖਾ ਸੂਤ, ਭੱਠਣ, ਇਕਾਦਸ਼ੀ, ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਵਰਤ, ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਝੂ, ਤੁਲਸੀ, ਮਾਲਾ, ਗੋਰ, ਮੱਠ, ਮੜੀ, ਮੂਰਤੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਆਦਿ ਭਰਮ-ਰੂਪ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ। ਗੁਰ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅਨ-ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਜਾਂ ਧਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਣਾ।

ਪੀਰ, ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ, ਪੁੱਛਣਾ, ਸੁੱਖਣਾ, ਸ਼ੀਰਨੀ ਵੇਦ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰ, ਗਾਇਤ੍ਰੀ, ਗੀਤਾ, ਕੁਰਾਨ, ਅੰਜੀਲ ਆਦਿ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ। ਹਾਂ, ਆਮ ਵਾਕਫੀ ਲਈ ਅਨਮਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਾ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ।

- ਹ) ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਰਹੇ; ਪਰ, ਕਿਸੇ ਅਨਧਰਮੀ ਦਾ ਦਿਲ ਨਾ ਦੁਖਾਵੇ।
- ਕ) ਹਰ ਇਕ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਅੱਗੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੇ।
- ਖ) ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਪੜ੍ਹਨੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਭੀ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ।
- ਗ) ਸੰਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਿਵਾਉਣੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਾ ਫਰਜ਼ ਹੈ।
- ਘ) ਕੇਸ ਲੜਕੇ ਕੇ ਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਸੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨਾ ਮੰਗੇ, ਕੇਸ ਉਹੀ (ਜਮਾਦਰੂ) ਰਖੋ, ਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਖੋ। ਸਿੱਖ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੜਕੇ ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਸਾਬਤ ਰਖੋ।
- ਙ) ਸਿੱਖ ਭੰਗ, ਅਫੀਮ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ, ਤਮਾਕੂ ਆਦਿ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਨਾ ਵਰਤੇ। ਅਮਲ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੇ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਰਖੋ।
- ਚ) ਸਿੱਖ ਮਰਦ ਅਥਵਾ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਨੱਕ, ਕੰਨ ਛੋਦਣਾ ਮਨ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ।
- ਛ) ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਨਾ ਮਾਰੇ, ਕੁੜੀ-ਮਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਨਾ ਵਰਤੇ।
- ਜ) ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਿਰਥਾਹ ਕਰੇ।
- ਝ) ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਗਰੀਬ ਦੀ ਰਸਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਗੋਲਕ ਜਾਣੇ।
- ਞ) ਚੋਰੀ ਯਾਰੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੇ, ਚੁਆ ਨ ਖੇਡੇ।
- ਟ) ਪਰ ਥੇਟੀ ਕੇ ਥੇਟੀ ਜਾਨੈ।
ਪਰ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਕੇ ਮਾਤ ਬਖਾਨੈ।
ਅਪਨਿ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਸੇ ਰਤਿ ਹੋਈ।
ਹਿਤਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋ ਸੋਈ।
ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਤੀਬਰਤ ਧਰਮ 'ਚ ਰਹੇ।
- ਠ) ਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਨਮ ਤੋਂ ਲੋਕੇ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਤਕ ਗੁਰ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਕਰੇ।
- ਡ) ਸਿੱਖ, ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਸਮੇਂ, 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ' ਬੁਲਾਵੇ। ਮਰਦ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਇਹੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ।
- ਦ) ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਪਰਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਘੁੰਡ ਕਰਨਾ ਉਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ।
- ਣ) ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਕਛਹਿਰੇ ਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਥਾਕੀ ਕੋਈ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਿੱਖ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਜਾਏ ਜਾਂ ਨਾ ਸਜਾਏ, ਦੋਵੇਂ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਰਹਿਤਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ, ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਰਹਿਤੀਆ ਗਰਦਾਨਣ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਮੁਖੀ ਵੀ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜੇ ਪੰਥਕ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਵਾਨਤ ਹੈ, ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਰਹਿਤ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਲਕੀਰ ਖਿੱਚਣ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਦਸ ਦਿਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਥਕ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਇਕ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਵੀ ਉਸੇ ਹੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਲੋੜ ਪੈਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਜੇ ਰਹਿਤ, ਸਿੰਘ ਸਜਣ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਮਝਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:⁵

ਫਿਰ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਜੱਤ ਰਹਿਤ ਦਸੈ - ਅੱਜ ਤੋਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ 'ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਜਨਮੇ ਗਵਨ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ' ਹੋ ਅਤੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ ਹੋ। ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਹਨ। ਜਨਮ ਆਪ ਦਾ ਕੇਸ ਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਤੇ ਵਾਸੀ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਹੋ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਸ ਵਿਚ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਭਰਾਤਾ ਹੋ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਕੁਲ, ਕਿਰਤ, ਕਰਮ, ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਰਬਾਤ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਬਾਤ-ਪਾਤ, ਜਨਮ, ਦੇਸ਼, ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਤਕ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਬਣ ਗਏ ਹੋ। ਇਕ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵੀ, ਦੇਵਤੇ, ਅਵਤਾਰ, ਪੈਗੰਬਰ ਦੀ ਉਪਾਸਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ। ਦਸੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਾਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਣਾ। ਤੁਸੀਂ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹੋ (ਜੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਿਖ ਲਓ) ਅਤੇ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਘੱਟ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਿਤਨੇਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨਾ, ਜਾਂ ਸੁਣਨਾ : ਜਪੁ, ਜਾਪੁ ੧੦ ਸਵਯੰ (ਸ੍ਰਾਵਗ ਸੁਧਾ ਵਾਲੇ) ਸੇ ਦਰ ਹਰਾਸਿ ਤੇ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਣਨਾ, ਪੰਜਾਂ ਕੌਕਿਆਂ ਕੇਸ, ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ, ਕਛਹਿਰਾ, ਕੰਘਾ, ਕੜਾ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਅੰਗ-ਸੰਗ ਰੱਖਣਾ। ਇਹ ਚਾਰ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ।

- 1) ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇ-ਅਦਬੀ।
- 2) ਕੁੱਠਾ (ਉਹ ਮਾਸ ਜੋ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਵੇ) ਖਾਣਾ।
- 3) ਪਰ-ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਜਾਂ ਪਰ-ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਗਮਨ (ਭੋਗਣਾ)।
- 4) ਤਮਾਕੂ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਣਾ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਕੁਰਹਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੁੜ ਕੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਆਪਣੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਅਨਭੋਲ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਕੁਰਹਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਦੰਡ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਸਿਰਗ੍ਰੰਮ (ਕੇਸਧਾਰੀ ਹੋਕੇ ਜੋ ਕੇਸ ਕਟਾ ਦੇਵੇ), ਨੜੀ ਮਾਰ (ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਕੇ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ) ਦਾ ਸੰਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ। ਪੰਥ ਸੇਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਟਹਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਭਤਪਰ ਰਹਿਣਾ, ਆਪਣੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਦਸਵੰਧ ਦੇਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਕੰਮ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਰਨੇ।

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜ਼ਬੋਬੰਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੂਤ ਪਰੇਏ ਰਹਿਣਾ, ਰਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਭੁਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਹੋਕੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਬਖਸ਼ਾਉਣੀ। ਅੱਗੋਂ ਲਈ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਹਿਣਾ।

ਤਨਖਾਹੀਏ ਇਹ ਹਨ —

- 1) ਮੀਟੇ, ਮਸੰਦ, ਧੀਰਮਲੀਏ, ਰਾਮਰਾਈਏ, ਆਦਿਕ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਂ ਨੜੀ ਮਾਰ, ਕੁੜੀ ਮਾਰ, ਸਿਰਗ੍ਰੰਮ ਨਾਲ ਵਰਤਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
- 2) ਬੇ-ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੀਏ ਜਾਂ ਪਤਿਤ ਦਾ ਜੁਠਾ ਖਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ।
- 3) ਦਾਹੜਾ ਰੰਗਣ ਵਾਲਾ।
- 4) ਪੁੱਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਧੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਕ ਮੁੱਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ।
- 5) ਕੋਈ ਨਸ਼ਾ (ਭੰਗ, ਅਵੀਮ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ, ਪੇਸ਼ਤ, ਕੁਕੀਨ, ਆਦਿਕ) ਵਰਤਣ ਵਾਲਾ।
- 6) ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਕਰਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ।
- 7) ਰਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਭੁਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ।

ਹੁਣ ਸਵਾਲ ਇਹ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਟੀਆਂ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ? ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਹ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਿਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਧ ਰਹੇ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੇ ਰੁਹਜਾਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪੱਗ ਤੋਂ ਪਟਕੇ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਸਿਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਟੋਪੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਤੁਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਨਿਕਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਟਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿਖ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਰੋਕ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਵਾਂ ਨਵਾਂ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਾਂ ਸੱਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਸਜੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਖ ਸਜਣ ਦੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਇਮ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਿਖੀ ਵਲ ਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਘੱਰ ਦੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖ ਸਜਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੱਜੇ ਪਰਵੇਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪਰਵੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਮਗਰ ਮੁੜ ਜਾਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਈਸਾਈਅਤ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪੁਸਤਕ “ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਅਹਿਦਨਾਮੇ” ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਰਾਇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਮੁੜ ਜਾਣ ਨੂੰ APOSTASY. ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੀ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।⁶ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਇਕ ਰਾਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਰਾਹ ਕਾਇਮ ਹਨ। ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਹਧਾਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਇਸਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸੰਤ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਦੂਜੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਹੀ ਪੱਧਰਾ ਕਰਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਸਿਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਕੇ ਵੀ ਭੋਲੇ ਭਾਲੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਖਰੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਹਨ। ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਪੰਜਾਹ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਖ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਖੁਲ੍ਹ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤੀਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਤਵ ਦੀ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਨੇ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਪਰਣਾਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਅਣਦੇਖੀ ਨੇ, ਸਿਖ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਗਾਨਗੀ ਵਲ ਧੱਕ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਂਝਿਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵੱਖਵਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਤਿਵਾਦੀ ਇਲਜ਼ਾਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਕੇ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨ ਇਸਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਤਾਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਇਸਦੇ ਸਮਾਧਾਨ ਦੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਰੰਗ ਦੇ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੇ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਖਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਪੱਛਮੀ ਧਰਮ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਰਾਹ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ APOSTASY. ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਜੁਰਮ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਜ਼ਬਤ ਕਰਨ, ਹੇਵਾ (WILL) ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਖੋਹਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਛੇਕ ਦੇਣ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾਯੋਗ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।⁷ ਪਰ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਮੂੰਹ ਨ ਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਪਤਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਤੋਂ ਪਰਤ ਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਆਸ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਦੀ ਵਿਧੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਇੱਛਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਲਾਈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ। ਸਿਖੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਛੇਕੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਛੇਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਮੀ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਣ ਦੀ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਗੁਆ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ। ਛੇਕੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਲਾਭ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਸਿਖ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਵਗਿਆਵਾਂ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੇ, ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਸਿਖ ਪਰਤ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲੈ ਆਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਇਥੇ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਇਸਲਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਛੇਕਣ ਦਾ

ਕੋਈ ਰਿਵਾਜ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਸੰਜਾਵਾਂ ਇਰਤਦਾਦ (Apostasy from Islam) ਮਰਦਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਕੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਖਣ ਦਾ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਨੇ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ, ਜਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਉਹ ਇਸਲਾਮ ਕਬੂਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਨੁਕਤਾ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਰ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਪਤਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੈ, ਉਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਸਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਬਰੀ ਬਾਹਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਲਈ ਘੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਖੁਦ ਵੀ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਪਰ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਡੇਰੇ; ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਸੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖੀ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ, ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬਦਲੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਨੇ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਨੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਦੀ ਵਿਧੀ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਉਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਫਖਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਲਈ ਛੇਕਣ ਦੀ ਵਿਧੀ ਵੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਪਿਛੇ ਆ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ।

ਸੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਵਾਰਸ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗਲ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਲੈਣਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤਾਜ਼ਗੀ ਨੂੰ ਖੋਰਾ ਲਗਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਗੀਆਂ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਿਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਅੰਦਰ ਮੁੰਡਣ ਵਾਂਗ ਦਸਤਾਰਬੰਦੀ ਨੇ ਉਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਪੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਿਦਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਬਦਲ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਥਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਲ ਪਿੱਠ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੰਥਕ ਮਾਡਲ ਨੂੰ ਖੋਰਾ ਲਗ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਪਰਵਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਹੋਣ ਲਗ ਪੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਮਲ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਮ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਣੇ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਉਲਝਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਬੇਧਿਕ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਦਾ ਭਾਗ ਬਣਨ ਲਗ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਅਨਭੇਲ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਜਾਣ ਬੁੱਝੇ ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਸਮਝਣ ਦਾ ਚਾਅ ਵੀ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਭਾਈ ਕਾਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ "ਮਨਮਤ ਮਿਲਾਕੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਵੀ ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੈ।"⁹ ਪੰਡਤ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਰੇਤਮ ਦੀ 'ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੀਰਥ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ' ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਈ ਗਈ ਹੈ, "ਨਾਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਥਾ ਮਿਸ਼੍ਰਤ ਵ ਬਡੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਧਰਮ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਰਹਿਤਨਾਮਾ ਅਖਵਾਏ।" ਕਈ ਨਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਸਾਬਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਵਿਚ "ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ" ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਿਤ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪੂਰੇ ਸੋਲ੍ਹੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਹ ਹਨ :

ਕਾਇਆ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਅਉਰਤ ਯਕੀਨਾ ॥ ਰੰਗ ਤਮਾਸੇ ਮਾਨ ਹਕੀਨਾ ॥

ਨਾਪਾਕ ਪਾਥੁ ਕਰਿ ਹਦੂਰਿ ਹਦੀਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ ॥¹⁰

ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਸਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਇਹ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਗੁਰਸਿਖੇ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਸੂਰਤ ਸਾਬਤ ਰਖਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ। ਇਉਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਇਜ਼ਤ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ। ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਰਥ ਦੀ ਭਨੇ, ਬੇਦੀਮਾਨ।"¹¹ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਕਤੀ ਮੰਤਵ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਹੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸਦਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਦੇ ਕਦੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਾਲ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਨਲ੍ਹ ਪੈਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਗਰੰਟੀ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।

ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਤਕ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਖ ਲੈਣਾ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੈ ਅੰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਵਾਧਾ ਇਹ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ, ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਥਕ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਵਿਚ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਟੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਧਿਰਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ —

1. ਜੋ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ।
2. ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਹਧਾਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।
3. ਜੋ ਜਜ਼ਬ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।
4. ਜੋ ਬਾਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਖੀ ਤਕ ਸਿਧੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਖੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।
5. ਜੋ ਸਿਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ, ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਧਿਅਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤਣ ਦੀ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੇ ਹਨ।
6. ਬਹੁਸੰਖਿਅਕ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹਾਈਜੀਨਿਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ। ਰੋਕਥਾਮ ਲਈ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ੳ) ਰੋਲ ਮਾਡਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਚੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਿਭਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਢਲੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਘਰ, ਸਕੂਲ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰੋਲ ਮਾਡਲ ਦੀ ਅਸਫਲਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਅ) ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਵਲ ਪਿੱਠ ਕਰਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਧ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਫਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਮਿੰਦਗੀ ਚਲਗੱਡ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

ੲ) ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਮਾਨਾਂਤਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸ) ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੋਲਬਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਦੀ ਅਸਮਰੱਥਤਾ।

ਹ) ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਚੌਧਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨਾਲ ਅਸਿਹਤਮੰਦ ਦੌੜ ਅਤੇ ਉਪਭੋਗੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਬੋਲਬਾਲਾ।

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1. James Hastings (Editor), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 623.

"The deliberate abandonment of one religion for another, e.g., Judaism for Christianity or vice versa, made voluntarily or under compulsion".

2. Ibid.

"In Christian jurisprudence apostasy is regarded as a far more serious offence than even heresy".

3. Ibid., p. 624.

"He that adopts any other religion shall be put to death".

4. *ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ*, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, 1992, ਪੰਨੇ 17-18.

5. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨੇ 26-27.

6. *Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 623.

"In many cases the falling away of the converts was not strictly apostasy but a relapse into Judaic Christianity or even heresy".

7. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 824.

8. ਉਹੀ।

9. *ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼*, ਪੰਨਾ 1015.

10. *ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ*, ਪੰਨਾ 1083.

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ਡਾ. ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਤੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਛਲੇ 12 ਸਾਲ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਨੇ ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਭੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੁਝ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਚਲਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਲਾਭਵੰਦ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਢਹਿੰਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ, ਉਥੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੈਦਾ-ਹੋਈ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਦੀ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਤੇ ਨਿੱਘ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਭਾਵਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਅੱਜ ਤੋਂ 100 ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਪੁਹੰਚੇ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ, ਸੰਤ ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ 1908 ਵਿਚ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰਵਾਈ। ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਘਾਟੇ ਕਾਰਨ, ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਗਏ। ਈਸਾਈਆਂ ਦੀ ਰੀਸੇ ਇਹ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੰਗੇ ਸਿਰ ਆਉਣ ਲਗ ਪਏ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਥੋੜੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਗਲਤ ਪਰਪਾਟੀ ਰੋਕੀ ਨਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ 1954 ਵਿਚ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਾਰਾ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਹੋਕੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਵੱਖਰਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ।

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਵੀਂ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ 1970 ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੈਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਵੀਂ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੰਜ ਪੱਗਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਲਭਦੇ। ਮੇਰੇ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ 1972 ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੰਗੇ ਸਿਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਨ ਕੇਵਲ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਦੋ ਸਨਬੰਧੀ ਦਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ। ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਕੋਲੰਬੀਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨ ਆਇਆ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਵੀਡੀਓ ਦੇਖੀ ਹੈ। ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਈਕਰੋਫੋਨ ਹੈ ਦੂਜੇ ਹੱਥ ਨਾਲ ਕੱਟੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਕੰਘੀ ਫੇਰਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਜੀ ਆਇਆਂ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਕੇ ਮੰਤਰੀ, ਆਪਣੇ ਲੋਕਚਰ ਤੇ ਪਹਿਲਾ, ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਲਏ ਹੋਏ ਰੁਮਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਲਪੇਟ ਕੇ ਜੇਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਸਦਕਾ ਅੱਜ ਓਥੇ 10 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਹੀ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਨੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸਜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੇਵਲ ਪੰਜ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ 500 ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਦਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਰ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਲਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰਚਾਰ ਸਦਕਾ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਧਦੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਤਿੰਨ-ਚਾਰ ਵਾਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦਾ ਬਾਟਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪਿਛੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਥੇ ਦੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਭੀ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਥੀ. ਸੀ. ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਿਲੇਬਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਦਸ ਕੁ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਵਾਲੰਟੀਅਰ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਤੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਦਸਵੰਧ ਕਢਕੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਿਖਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਛੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਚਲਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਦੇ-ਤਿੰਨ ਵਡੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ, ਟੇਪਾਂ ਵੰਡਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਇਹਨਾ ਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਚ, ਯਕੀਨ

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ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਕਿ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦੇ-ਤਿੰਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਛਡ ਕੇ, ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਨੰਗੇ ਸਿਰ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਕੀ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਲਗ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਕ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਲੜਕੀ ਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਉਹ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਕੀ ਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ।" ਇਹ ਗਲ ਛੇਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀ ਪੁੱਤਰੀ ਬੀਬੀ ਵੀਰੋ ਦੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਦਿਤੀ ।

ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਬੱਚੇ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਹੀ ਝੁਕਦੇ ਹੋ ਗਏ । ਅਰਦਾਸ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਾ ਘੇਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੜਕੀ ਦਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ । ਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਹੇ ਕੋਈ ਵੇਚੇ, ਚਾਹੇ ਕੋਈ ਜੁਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਰ ਦੇਵੇ । ਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੈ, ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ ।

ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਦਸੰਦਾ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਈ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਸਲਾਘਾ ਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਹੈ । ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਭੁਖ ਹੈ । ਓਹ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਭ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹਨ ।

ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਓ

ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਖੌਲ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਤਨਾਂ ਕੁ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਸਾਂ । ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਨ । ਪਰ ਇਕ ਅਜੇਹੀ ਲਾਲ ਹਨੇਰੀ ਆਈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਘੱਟਾ ਪਾਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਤੋੜ ਕੇ ਰੁਹਾਹੇ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ।

ਇਸ ਹਨੇਰੀ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਡਾ ਵਿਉਂਤਬੱਧ ਹੱਲਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਦੇ ਸੇਮੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੀਤਾ । ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਚੱਕਰ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਇਆ । ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਡਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਵਧੂ ਪਰਚਾਰਨ ਲੱਗੇ । ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ, ਬੇਸਮਝੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਲੋੜੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਫਸੇ ਦਸੱਕੇ ਪਿਛਾਹ ਖਿੱਚੂ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲਗਿਆ । ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੇਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਭਾਵਤ ਕੀਤਾ । ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਲ ਮਾਡਲ ਮੰਨਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਲਗਾ ਤੁਰੇ । ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ । ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬਹੁਤ ਛੋਟੇ ਦਾਇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ । ਪਗੜੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਝੇ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਦਸੱਟੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਰੁਹਾਹੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਸਮਝ ਆ ਸਕੇ । ਉਸ ਦੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਆਹ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਗੀ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਸਨ । ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਜੀ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗੇ, "ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ, ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ । ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਘੜ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ । ਜੇਵੇਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ । ਚਾਰ ਗੋੜੇ ਦੇਕੇ ਰਸਮ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰ ਦਿਓ । ਐਵੇਂ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਸਮਾਂ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ।" ਅਗੋਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ, "ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ? ਗੋੜੇ ਤਾਂ ਥੰਮ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਭੀ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਸਨ । ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਜੋੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕਣ ਲਈ ਕਹਾਂਗਾ । ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਗੋਂ ਮੱਥਾ ਨਾ ਟੇਕਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਵਾਉਣਾ ।" ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਹਨੇਰੀ ਆਈ ਅਤੇ ਆਕੇ ਚਲੀ ਗਈ । ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ । ਇਸ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਦੱਸ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਡਮੁੱਲੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦਾ ਗੌਰਵ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਮਝਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਗੌਰਵ ਨੂੰ ਜਗਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗ਼ੈਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੇਲਾਗ਼ ਹੋਕੇ ਇਕ ਖੋਜੀ ਬਣਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਟੂਕ ਮਾਤਰ ਵੀਚਾਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਦਸਾਂਗਾ । ਅਜੇਹੇ ਵੀਚਾਰ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਜਗਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੋਂਦੇ ਹਨ ।

- ੳ) ਇਕ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਬੀਬੀ ਪਚਲ ਬੱਕ, ਨੋਬਲ ਲਾਰੀਏਟ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, "ਮੈਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਤਨਾਂ ਪਰਭਾਵਤ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਤਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਚਾਹੇ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਚਾਹੇ ਨ, ਇਹ ਸਭ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਟੁੰਬਦੀ ਹੈ।"
- ਅ) ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਸਿੱਧ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਟੌਇਨਬੀ ਨੇ ਯੂ. ਐਨ. ਓ. ਵਲੋਂ ਛਾਪੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਪੜ੍ਹਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਉਂਦਲਾ ਹੈ.... ਸਭ ਲਈ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕੇਗੀ।"
- ੲ) ਸਵਾਮੀ ਸਤਿਯਾ ਨੰਦ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾਨੰਦ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ, "ਸਵਾਮੀ ਜੀ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ।" ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਥਰੂ ਵੇਖਕੇ ਸਤਿਯਾ ਨੰਦ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਪੁਛਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗੇ, "ਤੱਤ੍ਵ ਵਸਤੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਮੇਂ ਹੈ। ਮੈਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਰੇਤ ਛਾਨਣਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ, ਅਬ ਏਕ ਜਨਮ ਐਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਮੇਂ ਲੁੰਗਾ, ਤਬ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਹੋਗੀ।"

ਸਿਟਾ ਇਹ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਲਾਭ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੂਰਨ ਕੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਮੰਨੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ

ਗੈਰਵਸਤੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ "ਸਿੱਖ" ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਜ਼ਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਜ਼ੁਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੰਤ-ਸਪਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਦੀ ਭੀ ਨਾਲ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਗੈਰਵਸਤੀ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਅਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾਉਣਾ ਤਾਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ, ਪੰਜ ਕੱਕਾਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਫਾਲਤੂ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰੇ ਲਗਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਭੁੱਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਭੀ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਆਨ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਭੀ। ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਚਾਹਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਗਰੁਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਾਰਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

1) ਭੋਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਸਿੱਖ : ਅੱਜ ਤੋਂ ਤੀਹ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਯੂ. ਪੀ. ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਗਡੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਆਏ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਭਿਜੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਨਾਲ ਦੁੱਖ ਭੀ ਹੋਇਆ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੁੱਕੇ ਭੀ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਲਿਆਏ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੱਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕੇ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਵਡੀ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਰੋਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਪੀਂਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਭੋਲੇ ਭਾਲੇ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਲੋਕ ਭੀ ਇਸ ਗਲ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪਿਛੇ ਲਗ ਤੁਰੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਹਾਨੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਈ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਕਈ ਤਾਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਤਬਾਹ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ, ਮਸਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਰਾਂਦ ਆਦਿ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਜਾ ਆਉਣਾ, ਭੇਟਾ ਦੇਣੀ, ਮਰਨੇ ਪਰਨੇ ਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਤੇ ਮਾਨ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੀਚਾਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਰੱਖਣੀ, ਪਾਠ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਹੈ। ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਸੰਤਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਣ।

ਇਸ ਵੀਚਾਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੋਨੇਡਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਕ ਬਾਪੂ ਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੀ ਫਰੀ ਕਲਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਚੇ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਸੀ, "ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ।" ਕੁਝ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਓਹੀ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਅਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੱਬਰੂ ਭਰ ਕੇ ਖੜਾ ਇਹ ਕਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, "ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਓ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਭਿਅਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜੋ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਜਾਣਗੇ।" ਇਹ ਗਲ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਮਝ ਆਈ ਜਦੋਂ ਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਦੇ ਬੀਮਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੁਣਨ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਮੈਂ ਕੋਈ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਹਾਂ, ਜੇ ਉਹ ਬੀਮਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਛੱਡ ਆਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਫਜ਼ੂਲ ਗਲ ਲਈ ਮੇਰਾ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਰਬਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ?"

ਅਜੇਹੇ ਭੇਲੇ, ਅਣਜਾਣ ਪਰ ਦਿਲੋਂ ਸਚੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨਾ ਔਖਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕੇਵਲ ਸਹੀ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਲਾਭ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਹੈ।

2) ਚਤੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਆਰਥੀ ਸਿੱਖ : ਦੂਜਾ ਧੜਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਚਤੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਮਾਨ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ। ਸਗੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਨਾਲ ਤਰੋੜ ਮਰੋੜ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਾਭ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਉਣਾ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਜਾਗਦੇ ਹੀ ਸੁੱਤੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਬਹਾਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਹੋਰ ਕਈ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਲੋੜ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ "ਠੀਕ" ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੁਕਰਮਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਲਗ ਸਕੇ। ਈਸਾਈ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਪਰਨਾਲੀ (Sect) ਦੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਾਥੀ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਾਥੀ ਨਾਲ ਹਮ ਬਿਸਤਰੀ (Adultery) ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਪਾਪ (Sin) ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਈਸਾਈ ਮੱਤ ਦਾ ਅਸੂਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੀ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਤੇ ਅੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ। ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੋਲਾ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਪਰਾਈ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਗ ਹੀ ਧਰਮ ਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕੁਕਰਮ ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ? ਸਵਾਰਥੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਮਤਾ ਜਨਰਲ ਅਜਲਾਸ ਨੇ ਰੱਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਨਸ਼ੇ ਕਰਨੇ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੱਚੀ ਲਾਉਣੀ ਮਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਗਲ ਕੋਨੇਭਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਕੋਰਟ ਨੇ ਭੀ ਮੰਨ ਲਈ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਹੁਣ ਫੈਜ਼ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਪੱਗ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ? ਪਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਉਹ ਕੇਸ ਕੱਟਣ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਕਦੇ ਭੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਕੁਝ ਸ਼ਰਾਰਤੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਕ ਕੱਕਾ ਛੋਟਾ (36 ਇੰਚ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਤੋਂ 6 ਇੰਚ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ) ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕੇਸ ਛੋਟੇ ਕਰ ਲਏ। ਤੁਹਾਥੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਲੰਮੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾਂਭੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ? ਅਜੇਹੇ ਮਖੋਲ ਉਹ ਘੜਦੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਅੱਧੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਦੇਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ "ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਗਲਤ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਲਾਭ ਹੈ? ਵੇਖੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਪੱਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਾਂ। ਇਹ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਥਾਵੇ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਨ।"

ਅਜੇਹੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਢਾਹ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਤੋਂ ਤੋੜਦੇ ਹਨ। ਲਾਲ ਹਨ੍ਹੇਰੀ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ - ਇਹ ਸ਼ਰਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਅਨ੍ਹੇਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਬਸ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਕਰਨਾ ਖੇਡ ਬਣੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਫੇੜਖਾਨੀ ਤੇ ਮਖੋਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਕ ਕੱਟੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਲਾਂਭਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਕੱਟੜਪੁਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਦਰ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਾ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਹਾਂ। ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਦੇਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਂਵ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਵੰਡਣਾ ਹੀ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਉ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਿਹਤ ਲਈ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ।"

ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਰਾਗੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬੁਲਾ ਲਿਆ। ਦੀਵਾਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਪਾਤੀ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਚਾਹ ਪੀਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਗੜੀ ਨਾ ਬਨ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ "ਰਾਗੀ ਜੀ, ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਕੇਸ ਨਾ ਕਟਣ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਨਾ ਪੀਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਥਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਫਿਰ ਕਿਹਾ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਮਨ੍ਹਾ ਹਨ। ਰੋਜ਼ ਓਹੀ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹੋ। ਅਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਵੀ ਓਹੀ ਕਥਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਏ। ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਸ ਰੱਖਣੇ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਛੁਟਣੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਗੇ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਨਾ ਕਰਿਓ।"

ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੀ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬੋਲ ਉਠਿਆ, "ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਪੈਗ ਲਾਕੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਰਤੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਟਿਕਦੀ ਹੈ।"

ਜ਼ਰਾ ਸੋਚੋ, ਪਰਬੰਧਕ ਹੀ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਦੂਰ ਜਾ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹਨ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਤੋਂ।

ਇਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਰੱਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਬਣ ਸਕਣ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਲੀਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਾਂ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਮਾਇਆ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ? ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖ ਚਲਾਕੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ (ਪਰ ਧੋਖਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ), ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਹਿਲੀਆਂ ਨੌਂ ਪਾਤਿਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਾਂ। ਉਂਵ ਕੇਈ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ, ਜਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ (ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਜਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਜਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ)।

ਸਹਿਜਧਾਰੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੇਰ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੀ ਪੁਲੀਟੀਕਲ ਦਬਾ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਕਥਾ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੁਲ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮੰਗ ਮੋਕਾ ਲਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਮਨਵਾ ਭੀ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ। ਇਸ ਗਲ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈਕੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਮੇਲਨ ਦੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅੰਦਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸੈਕਟਰੀ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਦਲੀਲ ਭਰੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਨਾਂਹ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਤੈਪਲੇ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ।

ਇਹ ਮੰਗ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਹੋਣਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਮੇਨਾ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਜਾਂ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਂ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੇਨੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆਂ ਮੰਨ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਛੁਪੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਭੋਲੀ-ਭਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਜਾਪਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਰੇਲ ਕੇ ਭੁਲਾ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ। ਮਨਮੱਤ ਉਤੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਰ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਭੋਲੇ-ਭਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਗਾਉਣ, ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

ਕੇਸ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਬੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਦਾਅਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੱਕਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵੀਨ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਭੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ :

(1) ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਆਏ ਹਵਾਈ ਅੱਡੇ ਤੇ ਉਤਰਦੇ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗਲ ਇਹ ਕਹੀ, "ਓਏ ਮੁੰਡਿਆ। ਆਹ ਜੰਗਲ (ਕੇਸ) ਏਥੇ ਨਾਲ ਲੈਕੇ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਚਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਨਾਈ ਦੇ ਜਾਕੇ ਤੇਨੂੰ ਬੰਦਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆਵਾਂ।" ਘਰ ਜਾਕੇ ਵੀ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਰੋਜ਼ ਸੁਣਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਦਾ। ਉਹ ਤੰਗ ਆਕੇ ਘਰ ਛੱਡ ਗਿਆ।

ਕੁਝ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਉਹੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰ ਰੋਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਉਸ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਆਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਾ "ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੱਚਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਹੈ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮੁਆਫ਼ ਕਰ ਦੇਹ। ਤੇਰੀ ਪੱਕੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਲਾਹਨਤਾਂ ਪਾਉਂਦੀ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਤੇਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਲਾਹ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੋਨੇ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਉੱਜੜ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਡੋਟਾਂ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਸੀ ਹੁਣ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਓਥੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ, ਤੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਪੱਕੜੀ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਰਹੂੰਗਾ।"

ਪਗੜੀ ਨਾ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਗੜੀ ਲਾਹੁਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਪਿਛੇ ਪਛਤਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਮਲੇਸ਼ੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਵੇਨਕੂਵਰ ਆਕੇ ਵੱਸੇ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੇਸ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਵਾ ਲਏ। ਪਰ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਕਰ ਜਾਣ ਪਿਛੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੇਸ ਰੱਖ ਲਏ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੀ ਛਕ ਲਿਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ, “ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪਿਤਾ ਦੇ ਜਿਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਇਹ ਸੁਭ ਕੰਮ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ?” ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਸੀ, “ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਟੋ ਹੁਣ ਵੱਜੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਗ ਪਏ ਹਾਂ।” ਅਜੇਹੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਰਾਜ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੇਰੇ (ਪੰਜਾਬ) ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹੋਈ। ਇਕ ਸਕੂਲ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਗਿਆ, ਕੇਸ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਵਾ ਆਇਆ। ਵਾਪਸ ਆਏ ਨੂੰ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਟਾਂਗੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ, “ਬਾਬੂ ਜੀ ਕਿਥੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ?” ਇਹ ਸੁਣਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਦਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਅਜੇਹੀ ਸਟੋ ਲਗੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬਾਬੂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁੜ ਸਹਦਾਰ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ।

(2) ਕੇਸ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਕਰਦੇ ਕੈਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ, “ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਉਹ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਟ ਸਕਦੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਚਾਅ ਲਈ ਰਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਅੱਜ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ।”

ਵੇਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਨੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਗੇਰੇ ਟੀਚਰ ਨੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ, “ਤੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਵੇਂ, ਤੇਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ। ਦੂਸਰਾ ਲੜਕਾ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਪਗੜੀ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ।” ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਮੇਨੇ ਬਾਪ ਨੇ ਮਾਸੂਮ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਸੀ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਓਹੀ ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਹ ਮੁੰਡਾ (ਆਰਥੋਡਾਕਸ) ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਵਿਅਰਥ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਲੋੜੀਆਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੱਝਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਮਾਡਰਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਹਾਂ।” ਇਸ ਗਲ ਤੇ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਣ ਹੈ, ਮੇਨੇ ਮਾਂ ਬਾਪ ਦੇ ਗਲਤ ਉੱਤਰ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਕੂਲੀ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਝਗੜੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ।

(3) ਇਕ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ, “ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੀਂਦੇ, ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਨਾ ਪੀਆ ਕਰੋ। ਜੇ ਪੀਣੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਅਸਤੀਫਾ ਦੇ ਦਿਓ।” ਪਿਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਤਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ “ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਪੀਣੀ ਮਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੈ। ਖਾਣਾ ਹਜ਼ਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੋਸ਼ਲ ਡਰਿੰਕ ਮਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ।” ਪਰ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੁਕਾਂ ਸੁਣਾ ਕੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਛੱਡਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਥੇਅੰਤ ਅਜੇਹੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਵੇਖੀਆਂ ਸੁਣੀਆਂ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਹ ਦੱਸਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਂਝੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੇਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਲੁਕਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਸ ਕਟੋਣ ਲਈ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉੱਥੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਕੇਸ ਕਟੋਣੇ ਵਿਵਰਜਤ ਹਨ।

3) **ਭੇਖੀ ਬਾਬੇ :** ਸਧਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਭੇਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਪਾਕੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਈ ਭੇਖੀ ਬਾਬੇ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਮਤ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਬਤੀ ਲੋਕ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਖੌਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਭਰਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਓਥੇ ਭੁਝ ਭੇਖੀ ਬਾਬੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰੂਪ ਧਾਰ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਲ ਖਿਚਦੇ ਹਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਤੋਂ ਮੋੜ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਚੇਲੇ ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਚੂਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਫੜਨ ਲਈ ਪਿੰਜਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮਨ-ਪਸੰਦ ਖੁਰਾਕ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸੰਤ-ਜਾਪਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਤ ਕਹਾਉਂਦੇ ‘ਪਰਚਾਰਕ’ ਥੇਅੰਤ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਮਿੱਠੇ ਨਿਮ੍ਰਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੋਲ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਹਨ “ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹ ਬਾਨਾਰਸ ਕੇ ਨਗ।” ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਚੇ ਸੰਤ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਓਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਅਸਲੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਸੰਤ ਨੇ 1984 ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੇ 'ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ' ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਨਾਂਹ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਪਰਗਟ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਪੰਥ ਚੋਂ ਛੇਕੇ-ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਜ਼ੀਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ "ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ" ਵਲੋਂ ਮਾਣ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਣ ਅਤੇ 'ਸਰੋਪਾ ਭੋਟ' ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਕਰ ਜਾਣ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮਿਰਤਕ ਦੇਹ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀਜ਼ੇ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ "ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ" ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਅਜੇਹੇ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅਡੋਂ ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਹਰ ਸੰਤ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਅਡਰੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ, ਤਾਕਿ ਉਹਦੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਖਰੇ ਜਾਣੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ। ਇਕ 'ਸੰਤ' ਦੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਲੱਕ ਨਾਲ ਨੀਲਾ ਪਟਕਾ ਬਨ੍ਹਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਉਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਆਪਣਾ-ਆਪਣਾ ਆਸਣ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ-ਆਪਣਾ ਆਸਣ ਵਿਛਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਸਣ ਦਾ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਆਉਣੋਂ ਹਟ ਗਏ। ਕੁੱਝ ਚਿਰ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਆਸਣ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਆਉਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਆਉਣਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ, ਸੰਗਤ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਮਲੇਸ਼ੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਇਕ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਲੈ ਗਿਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਥੇ ਜਾਕੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਅਗਲੇ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਝੱਟ ਬੈਲ ਪ੍ਰਦੇ, "ਓਥੇ ਸਾਡਾ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਈ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ।" ਇਹਨਾਂ "ਗੁਰਭਾਈਆਂ" ਦਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਤਕੜਾ ਜਾਲ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਛਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਗ੍ਰਾਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਚੇਚਾ ਮਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਕੇ ਨਿਵਾਜ਼ਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਚੋਲੇ (ਗੁਰਭਾਈ) ਬਣਾ ਸਕਣ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਪਰਚਾਰਕ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੱਦੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ੁਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲਾਂ ਚਲਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਮਾਸੂਮ ਸੇਵਕਣੀਆਂ ਚੇਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਰੇਪ (rape) ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਵਿਸਾਹਘਾਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ।

ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਔਖੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸਵਾਰਥੀ ਅਤੇ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ 'ਸੰਤ' ਬਣਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁਟਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਵਿਚ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜਾ 'ਸੰਤ' ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦਾ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਪਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੇ ਪਾਸ ਰਾਧਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ 'ਗੁਰੂ' ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ।।

ਸਾਡੇ ਬਚੇ ਪਤਿਤ ਕਿਉਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ?

ਰਹਿਤ-ਵਾੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਆੜ

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ਸਾਡੇ ਬਚੇ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਚਿੰਤਤ ਹਾਂ। ਬਚਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ। ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਲੇਕਚਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਬਚਿਆਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਣ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਪਰ ਬਚੇ ਪ੍ਰਣ ਤੋੜ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉਦਾਸ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸੋਚਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਮਤਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਤਨੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਸਖਤੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਧ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਜਿਆ ਹੀ ਅਨ-ਮਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਲੋਕ ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਜਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਤਤਪਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਮੌਕੇ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਕਦੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਵੇ। ਅਜ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਕਤ ਦੀ ਸੋਚ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਉਂ ਫਰਕ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜਾਨਣ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਰੁਹਜਾਨ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਨਮੋਸ਼ੀ ਹੀ ਪਲੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ। ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਦੇਹ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਕਰਮ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦੇਹ ਦੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ, ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਨੂੰ ਇਤਨੀ ਭ੍ਰਮਰਥਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਚੰਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਦ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਪਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸ਼ੈਤਾਨ ਮਨ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ੈਤਾਨ ਮਨ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਦੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਠੀਕ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਉਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੇ ਹਥ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਚੋਰੀ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸੋਧ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਤਾਂ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ - “ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥੁ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ ਹੋਰ ਨਿਰਫਲ ਕਰਨੀ”, ਪਰ ਮਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ - ਪੈਸਾ ਇਕਠਾ ਕਰ ਲੈ ਇਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸੁਖ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ ਪਾਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਇਕਠੀ ਕਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਲਗ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ — ‘ਜੀਵਨਾ ਸਫਲ ਜੀਵਨ, ਸੁਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਜਪਿ ਸਦ ਜੀਵਨਾ’ (ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 5, ਪੰਨੇ 1018-19) ਪਰ ਮਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ - ਕਰ ਲੈ ਐਸਾ ‘ਇਹ ਜਗ ਮਿਠਾ ਤੇ ਅਗਲਾ ਕਿਨ ਡਿਠਾ’। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸਮਝਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ - ‘ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੁਬੁਹ ਦੇਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥’ (ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1245) ਮਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕੰਮ ਮੈਂ ਕਰਾਂ ਖਾਵੇ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ, ਇਹ ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਦੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਹੜਪਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ — ਨਾਮ ਜਪੇ ਮਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਕਰੀ ਵਾਂਗਰ ਮੂੰਹ ਮਾਰੀ ਜਾਈਏ। ਸਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, ਦਸਾ ਨਹੁੰਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪਰ ਮਨ ਆਲਸੀ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਵੰਡ ਛਕਣ ਦੀ ਪਰ ਮਨ ਲਾਲਚੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਠਣ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਰੋਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਕੋ ਜਹੇ ਹਨ, ਕਿਉਂ ਨੀਂਦ ਖਰਾਬ ਕਰੀਏ। ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ। ਰਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ਹੀ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਛਾਹ ਖਿਚੂ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾ ਪੀਏ, ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣਾ? ਗਲ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਕੰਮ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਨੇ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਲਗਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਗਲਤ ਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਭ ਥਾਤ ਜਾਨਤ ਹੀ ਅਉਗਨੁ ਕਰੈ॥

ਕਾਹੇ ਕੀ ਕੁਸਲਾਤ ਹਾਥਿ ਦੀਪੁ ਕੂਏ ਪਰੈ॥

(ਪੰਨਾ 1376)

ਬਹਿਸ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਮਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਤੇਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਦੋ ਜਮਾਂ ਦੇ (2+2=5) ਪੰਜ ਵੀ ਸਿਧ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇ। ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਵੀ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਲਗ ਕੇ ਖੁਆਰ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਅੰਤਰ ਆਤਮੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਪਤਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕੀ ਗਲਤ। ਬਨਾਵਟੀ ਪਰਤਾਂ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਰ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ

ਅਤੇ ਅਸਲ ਪਰਤਖ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਉਘੜਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਏ ਮਨ ਚੰਚਲਾ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਕਿਨੇ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ।।

ਜੇ ਨਾ ਸਮਝੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਭੁੰਡਾ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਦੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਾਉਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ —

‘ਏ ਮਨ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ’।

(ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: 3 ਅਨੰਦ)

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਣ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਾਰ ਬਾਰ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਾਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ —

“ਏ ਮਨ ਮੇਰਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਸਮਝੁ ਅਚੇਤ ਇਆਇਆ ਰਾਮ।। ਏ ਮਨ ਮੇਰਿਆ, ਛਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ, ਗੁਣੀ ਸਮਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ।।”

(ਭੁਖਾਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ 1, ਪੰਨੇ 1112-13)

ਨੇੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਰਸਨਾ ਨੂੰ, ਸ੍ਰਵਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ, ਹਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਦੇਹੀ ਸਫਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਦਿਮਾਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਥਿੜਕਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। “ਅਗਾਹਾਂ ਕੂ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਘ, ਪਿਛਾਹ ਫੇਰ ਨਾ ਮੋਹਤੜਾ” ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਮਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਰ-ਬਾਰ ਅਪਣੇ ਟੀਚੇ ਤੋਂ ਪਿਛੇ ਖਿਚਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਰਹਿਤ ਰੂਪੀ ਭੁੰਡਾ ਪੁਆਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਜੋ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਖੰਡੇ ਦਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਰੂਪ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਨਿਡਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਅਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੇ ਡਰ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਰਖਣ ਦੇ ਸਮਰਥ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕਦੇ ਜੇ ਮਨ ਅਪਣਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿਖਾਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵੀ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਰੂਪੀ ਭੁੰਡਾ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਫਟ ਕਾਬੂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪਹਿਲੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਕੇਸ਼ : ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ। ਇਹ ਰਹਿਤ ਇਕ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਮ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦਿਖ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਤਾਂ ਗੰਭੀਰ, ਸਿਆਣੀ, ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦਿਖ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਸਿਧੀ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਜਾਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਕੋਈ ਗਲਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਆਵੇਗਾ। — ਸ਼ਕਲ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਗਾੜਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਚੰਚਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾ ਵੀ ਘੋਖੀਏ, ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਇਤਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਇਕ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਪੀਰ ਪੈਗੰਬਰ, ਮਹਾਨ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਨੋ ਕਲਪਿਤ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਦੇਖੋ — ਇਹ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਕੰਘਾ : ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਫਾਈ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਕੰਘਾ ਵਾਹ ਕੇ ਸੁਹਣੀ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਚੁਸਤ ਅਤੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਬਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਲਸ ਉਸਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਫਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਚੁਸਤ ਰਹਿ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦਾ ਅਜ਼ਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਜਰਬਾ ਹੈ।

ਕੁੜਾ : ਸਜੀ ਹਥ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਈ ਗਲਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਪਣਾ ਸਜਾ ਹਥ ਅਗੇ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਹਥਕੜੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਇਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਦੇਵੇਗੀ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਹਥ ਚੋਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੇਗਾ, ਕਤਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੇਗਾ, ਮਜ਼ਲੂਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਿੱਸਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੁਟੇਗਾ।

ਕੁਛਾਹਿਰਾ : ਕਾਮੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਮ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

ਕਿਰਪਾਨ : ਕੋਈ ਜਥਰਦਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਆਣ ਬਣੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ

ਸਾਡੀ ਸ੍ਰੈ ਰਖਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਸਿਰਫ ਸ੍ਰੈ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਜ਼ਲੂਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੀਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰੇਗੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਬਣਾਏਗੀ। ਭਗਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਦਾ ਹੀਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਜ਼ੁਲਮ ਕਰ ਜਾਵੇ। ਜੇ ਕਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਹੀਣ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋ ਵੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਯਾਦ ਆ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਸਿਖ ਦਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਪਖ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਹੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਨਾ ਸੁਣੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਤਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਚ ਸਕਾਂਗੇ—

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਆ ਕਰੇ ਜਉ ਸਿਖਾ ਮਹਿ ਚੂਕ
ਅੰਧੇ ਏਕੁ ਨਾ ਲਾਗਈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਜਾਈਐ ਫੂਕ।

(ਪੰਨਾ 1372)

ਜਦੋਂ ਇਸ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਕੀਰੇ ਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ (ਰਹਿਤ ਦੁਆਰਾ) ਵਿਚ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਛਕਾ ਕੇ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਬੀਜ ਪਾ ਦੇਣਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਮ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਹੋ ਉਠੇਗਾ। ਨਾਮ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਾ ਖੜਕੇਗਾ। ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮਨੁਖ ਨਾਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਅਭੇਦ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਮੀ (ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ) ਦੇ ਸਭ ਗੁਣ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿਧ ਹੀ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਮਨੁਖਤਾ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਸੁਤੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਦਸਵੰਧ ਕਢੇਗਾ, ਕਿਹਤ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੰਡ ਕੇ ਛਕੇਗਾ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿਧ ਹੀ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ, ਲੋੜਵੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੰਗਰ ਛਕਾਏਗਾ। ਕਿਸੇ ਉਚੇਰੇ ਉਦਮ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਲੋੜ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ। ਚੰਗੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਹੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਉਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਮਨੁਖ ਲੁਕਾਈ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਕੂਨ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਤਤੀਆਂ ਤਵੀਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਬੈਠਣ ਦੀ ਸਮਰਥਾ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਵਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਖੇਪਰੀਆਂ ਲੁਹਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਸਰਬੰਸ ਵਾਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਦੇਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਥਾਲੇ ਖਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੰਡਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਵਾ ਕੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਸੜਵਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਰ ਪਵਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਮਰਥਾ ਵੀ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ 'ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਆ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਗੇ।' ਵੀ ਗਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਹੈ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨਾਮੀ ਬੰਦੇ ਦੀ।

ਇਸ ਮਾਇਆਵੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਨੁਖ ਡਾਢਾਡਲੇ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਦੇ ਕਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਦਿਆਂ ਜਪਦਿਆਂ ਵੀ ਮਨ ਅਪਣਾ ਰੂਪ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਆ ਘੇਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

"ਹਉਮੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਵਿਰੋਧੁ ਹੈ, ਦੂਇ ਨ ਵਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਇ।।" (ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ 3, ਪੰਨਾ 860)

ਬੰਦਾ ਭੁਲਣਹਾਰ ਹੈ। ਪਗ ਪਗ ਉਤੇ ਬਿੜਕਣ ਦਾ ਡਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਦੇ ਇਹ ਬਿੜਕ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਰਾਹ ਭੁਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਔਝੜੇ ਪੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪੱਲਾ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਭੁਲੜ ਮਨੁਖ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰ ਰਸਤਾ ਦਿਖਾ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਰਹਿਤ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਭੁਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਨੁਖ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਆਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਅਸਲੀ ਰਸਤਾ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਪੱਖ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਦੂਜਾ ਪਾਥੀ ਸਾਡਾ ਪੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ ਜੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਉਂਗਲੀ ਫੜ ਕੇ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਹ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਰਖੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਨਮਤੀ ਵੀ ਸਾਡਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਕਹਿ ਦੇਣਗੇ — 'ਚੰਗਾ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਬੰਦਾ ਹੈ' — ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਠਦਾ। ਪਾਠ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਚੋਰੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਪਿਆ ਏ, ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲਦਾ ਏ। ਤੂੰ ਕਿਉਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਜ ਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਏ'।

ਐਸੀ ਹੈ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ ਇਸ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਭੁਲਣਹਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਤਾਹ ਕੇ ਕਢ ਲਿਆਣ ਦੀ। ਰਹਿਤ ਸਾਡੀ ਵਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਾਬਤਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਖਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮੁਢਲੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਵਰਦੀ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ ਬੜੇ ਹੀ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਰਦੀ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਰਫ ਵਰਦੀ ਪਹਿਨਣ ਤਕ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਤ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਸਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਆਮ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਘਟੀਆ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੰਜਲ ਸਮਝੀ ਬੈਠੇ ਹਨ। ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਆੜ ਵਿਚ

ਬੁਰੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਰਹਿਤ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਵਾੜ ਦੀ ਨਿਆਈਂ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਨ ਰੂਪੀ ਖੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜ ਵਡੇ ਚੇਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੈ —

‘ਇਸ਼ੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪੰਚ ਚੇਰ ਵਸਹਿ, ਕਾਮੁ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ, ਲੋਭੁ, ਮੋਹੁ, ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ।

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਲੂਟਹਿ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੂਝਹਿ, ਕੋਇ ਨ ਸੁਣੈ ਪੁਕਾਰੁ’ ॥ (ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੩, ਪੰਨਾ 600)

ਪਰ ਇਸੇ ਦੀ ਆੜ ਵਿਚ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਮਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਲੋਕ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਹਨ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ — ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੀ ਸਚ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਸੋ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਹ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਫਸ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਫਿਰ ਪਛਤਾ ਪਛਤਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ—

ਮੈਂ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਵਡਹੰਸੁ ਹੈ ਤਾ ਮੈਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੰਗੁ।

ਜੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਬਗੁ ਬਪੁੜਾ, ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਭੇੜੀ ਅੰਗੁ।

(ਪੰਨਾ 1382)

ਪਛਤਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕੰਮ ਅਣਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੋ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ। ਫਿਰ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਐਸੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਰੂਪ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਨਫਰਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਆਰਜੀ ਤੌਰ ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਚੰਚਲ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰ ਮੰਕਾ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਹਾਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ। ਮਨ ਫਿਰ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ— ਕੀ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਹੈ ਰਹਿਤ ਰਖਣ ਦਾ। ਕੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਰੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਬਚਾ ਲਵੇਗੀ।

ਭੋਲਾ ਮਨ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਚੇਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਦੀ ਵਰਦੀ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਧੂ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਵਰਦੀ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਤੇ ਅਗੇ ਵਧੇਗਾ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਜਹੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਤਨੀ ਭਰਮਾਰ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸਲੀ ਬੰਦੇ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਨ ਵੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਬੂਝੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਸੇ ਹੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੀ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕੇਵਲ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਯਾ ਫਿਰ ਇਨਾਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਕਰਕੇ।

ਇਹ ਭਦਰ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਚਾਲਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਿਖਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਸਿਰਫ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੰਗੀਤਕਾਰ ਸੰਗੀਤ ਸਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਵੀ ਹਨ ਸਿਰਫ ਮਾਇਆ ਖਾਤਰ ਯਾ ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਖਾਤਰ। ਇਹ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਸਾਂਦੇ ਪਰ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕਰਵਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਪਣੀ ਅਮਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਅਲਗ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਹਰ ਕੰਮ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਿਤੇ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਤੋਲ ਤੋਲ ਕੇ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਵਿਆਹ ਕਰਵਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਫਿਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਗੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਭੰਗ ਕਰਕੇ ਤਲਾਕ ਲੈ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਬਰਾਤ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਲੜਕੀ ਦੇ ਚਰਿਤਰ ਉਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਲਗਾ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਬੂਝ ਹੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਪਵੇ। ‘ਹਮ ਘਰ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ’ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਬਰਾਤ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਪਰ ਘਰ ਆਏ ਸਾਜਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਾਬਾਂ ਪਿਲਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਮੀਟ ਮੁਰਗੇ ਖਵਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਰਾਜ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਲੜਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਘਰੋਂ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਕੱਢ ਦੇਣ। ਵਿਆਹ ਕੇ ਆਏ ਜੇੜੇ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ (Reception), ਤਾਂ ਗੰਦੇ ਗੰਦੇ ਗਾਣੇ ਗਾਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਖੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸ਼ਰੇਣਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਭੁਲ ਚੁਕੇ ਹਾਂ? ਨਹੀਂ, ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਕਿਤਾਬੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਮਝ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਯਾ ਫਿਰ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ ਦੇ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਲੋਕਚਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਮਗਰੀ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਂਝ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਗਿਆਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸਭਯ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਭਯ ਨਾਰਾਜ਼ਿਕ ਜੋ ਹੋਏ। ਇਹ ਹੈ ਸਾਡੀ ਸੋਚਨੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਰਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜਨੇਊ ਹੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਕੀ ਇਸ ਸੋਚਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਡੀ ਨਵੀਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਹਿਤ ਕੀ ਹੈ? ਇਹ ਕਿਉਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ? ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਇਕ ਮਾਸੂਮ ਬੱਚਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਮਾਂ ਬਾਪ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਗਲਤਾਨ ਦੇਖਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਉਪਰ ਰਹਿਤ ਲਈ ਨਫਰਤ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣੀ ਇਕ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਸਚਾਈ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਅਮਲੀ ਸ਼ਿੰਦਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਧਾਰਦੇ, ਉਦੋਂ ਤਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਪੋਚ ਰਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ। ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰੇ ਨਾ ਉਤਰ ਸਕੀਏ ਪਰ ਘਟ ਤੋਂ ਘਟ ਬੁਰੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਗਰੇਜ਼ ਤਾਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸਾਡਾ ਨਵਾਂ ਪੋਚ ਇਤਨਾ ਬੁਧੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਾੜੀ ਜਗਿਆਸੂ ਵਿਚ ਫਰਕ ਨਾ ਪਹਿਚਾਨ ਸਕੇ। ਅਨਾੜੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਹੀ ਸਹੀ ਪਰ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਤਾਂ ਨਾ ਬਣੀਏ। ਆਉ ਹੱਭਲਾ ਮਾਰੀਏ ਰਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਲਾਜ ਰਖੀਏ। ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਦਿਤੇ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਬਾਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਨਾਮ ਨਾ ਕਰੀਏ। ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਜਗਾਈਏ। ਫਿਰ ਦੇਖਣਾ ਸਾਡਾ ਨਵਾਂ ਪੋਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਹੀ ਪਦ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਰਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਰਪਕ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਅਪਣੀ ਸ਼ਿੰਦਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਬਣਾਈਏ। ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ — ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਸਿਖ।

ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ-ਵਿਮੁਖਤਾ

ਡਾ. ਸਰਬਜੋਤ ਕੌਰ*

ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਦੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਪਰਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਅੰਤਰ-ਸੰਬੰਧ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ 'ਇਕੱਲਾ ਜਾਣਨਾ' ਮਨੁੱਖ ਲਈ ਲਾਹੇਵੰਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਢਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਜੀਵਨ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਾਰੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਬੀਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਆਪਣਾ ਰੂਪ ਵਟਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਸਲ ਟਿਕਾਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਹਿਲ ਕੇ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੇਗਿਸ਼ਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਰ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਰਸ ਗੁਆ ਬੈਠਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਇਹ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਅਮਲਹੀਣ ਤੇ ਨਿਕੰਮੀਆਂ ਜਾਪਣ ਲੱਗ ਪੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਦੇਹ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੇਵਲ ਸੋਚ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਚਲਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਭਾਵਕ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਇਉਂ ਧਰਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਰੁਚੀ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਤਤ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ 'ਵਿਵੇਕਬੁੱਧੀ' ਦੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ, ਪਰੰਤੂ ਸਮੇਂ ਨੇ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮੇੜ ਤੇ ਲਿਆ ਖੜਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਵਿਵੇਕਬੁੱਧੀ ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਤਾਰਕਿਕ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪਦਾਰਥਵਾਦ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸੰਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਥੇਮੁਖ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਕੰਪੀਊਟਰ ਯੁੱਗ ਦਾ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਚਲਦੇ ਫਿਰਦੇ ਮਸ਼ੀਨੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪੈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਇਤਨਾ ਨਵੇਕਲਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਲਗੀ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਵੀ ਕਣ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦੇਣ ਲੱਗ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਸੋਚਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੇਰਨਾਂ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਤੇ ਜਲਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾਤੁਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਹਥਲੇ ਪਰਚੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਭਾਗ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਅਰੁਚੀ ਦੇ ਕੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੀ ਉਪਾਅ ਕਰਨੇ ਚਾਹੀਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਧਰਮ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅਟੁੱਟ ਅੰਗ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਜਗਤ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਿਖੇੜ ਕੇ ਸਹੀ ਮਾਨਵੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਧਰਮ ਵਰਗੀ ਅਮੋਲਕ ਵਸਤੂ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਦੇਸ਼ਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਹੈ। ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਾ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੀ ਪੁਨਰ-ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਨ ਦਾ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਦਿਆਗ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਨ ਤੇ ਦੁਰਲੱਭ ਥਾਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਮਝ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦਿਸਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈ ਸਕਦੀ। ਤੀਜੇ ਨੇਤਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਤੀਜਾ ਨੇਤਰ ਹੋ ਸੇਝੀ ਦਾ, ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਾ, ਸਮਝ ਦਾ, ਸੱਚ ਦਾ, ਪਕੜ ਦਾ। ਪਰ ਬਦੀਕਸਮਤੀ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ ਪਕੜ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਕਿੱਤਾ-ਉਪਯੋਗਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਆਲੋਪ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਲੁੱਟੋ-ਖਸੁੱਟੋ, ਮਾਰ-ਧਾੜ, ਅਰਾਜਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡਾ ਸਮਾਜ ਗੁਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੇ ਪਾਠਕ੍ਰਮ ਤੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਗਵਾਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਥੇ ਕੈਥਰਿਜ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਰਾਜਤੰਤਰ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਥੇ ਆਕਸਫੋਰਡ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ

* ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ, ਕੇਰੀਮਟ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਾਰਵਿਮੇਨ, ਲਾਧਿਆਣਾ।

ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਰਾਜਤੰਤਰ ਦੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸਮਰਥਕ। ਓਲੀਵਰ ਕ੍ਰਾਮਵੈਲ ਜਿਸਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਤੰਤਰ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਗਣਤੰਤਰ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ, ਕੈਂਬਰਿਜ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਸੀ। ਸੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਉਸਾਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਢਾਹੁਣ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਥੇ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਪਾਠਕ੍ਰਮ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚ ਚਰਿਤਰਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਲਤ ਗਲਤ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਪਾਠਕ੍ਰਮ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਮੀ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਥੇ ਹੇਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ, ਉਥੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰੰਗਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਅੱਜ ਹਰੇਕ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਇਜ਼ਤ ਮਾਣ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਪਾਠਕ੍ਰਮ ਦੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਰੱਖ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਥੇ ਅੱਜ ਦਾ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਹੋਰ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਥੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਪਿਛਾਓ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਉਹ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਤਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਡਿਗਦਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਮੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪੜ੍ਹ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਢੇਰ ਕੁੜੇ,

ਮੇਰਾ ਵਧਦਾ ਜਾਏ ਹਨੇਰ ਕੁੜੇ।

ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਾਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਾਠਕ੍ਰਮ ਵਿਚ 'ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ' ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਿਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਦੇਣੀ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਜਿਥੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਰੀਵ ਮਨੋਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕਸੁਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਜਾਣੂ ਹੋਣਗੇ, ਉਥੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਗੌਰਵ ਵੀ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨਗੇ। ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਅਨੁਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਤੇ ਫੇਕੇ ਤੇ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਰੀਤੀ ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਛੁਟਕਾਰਾ ਮਿਲੇਗਾ। ਜਿਥੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਥੇ ਹਨੇਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ। ਬਲਬ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਾਰ ਟੁੱਟ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਲਬ ਦੀ ਰੋਸ਼ਨੀ ਮੁੱਕ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਵਾਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸੱਚ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਵ-ਤਾਰ ਜੋੜਨੀ ਅਨਿਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ। Bulwer ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਵਧੀਆ ਵਸਤੂ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ 'ਅਸਲੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ' ਤੋਂ ਸਖੱਟੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਘਟੀਆ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ:

"ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਐਮ. ਏ. ਪਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ (ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ) ਨੂੰ ਭੁੱਲ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਐਮ. ਏ. ਨਿਸ਼ਫਲ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਪਾਪ ਤਾਂ ਪਾਪ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੂਝ ਤੇ ਖਿਨਾਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਪੁੰਨ ਵੀ ਪਾਪ ਹੈ। ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੂਝ ਦਿਤੇ ਖਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਇਲ ਜੋੜਨ ਦੀ, ਥਾਂ ਤੋੜਨ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਆਹ! ਸਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਧਾੜ, ਕਤਲ, ਖੂਨ-ਖਰਾਬਾ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ ਸਦਕਾ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਰੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਰੋਹੜ ਨਹੀਂ, ਰੋਹੜ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।"

ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਅੱਜ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਚਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ।

ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਅਰੁਚੀ ਦਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਜ਼ਾਹੀਟਤਾ। ਘਰ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਪਾਠਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਬੱਚਾ ਅੱਧ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਬੈਠਦਾ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਂ ਬਾਪ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੇ ਹਨ, ਬੋਲਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਕਰਮ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਦੀ ਮੌਜੂਦਗੀ, ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਤੇ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬੱਚੇ ਅਰੇਤ ਹੀ ਕਬੂਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਰਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਬੜੇ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਿਣੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ

ਅਣਗਹਿਲੀ ਵਰਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਣੀ, ਬਹਿਣੀ, ਕਹਿਣੀ, ਖਾਣ-ਪੀਣ ਪੇਸ਼ਾਕ ਸਭ ਪਦਾਰਥਵਾਦ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਗ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਜਾਵਟ ਤੇ ਲੱਗ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਝਾਕੀਆਂ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਸਾਰਾ ਫਿਕਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਦਿਵਾਉਣ ਤੇ ਲਗਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਈ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਹੀ ਘਰ ਹੈ ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਬੇਮੁਖਤਾਈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਅਹੁਦਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਘਟਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਸੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼-ਦੀਨ ਤੇ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ। ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਥੇ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਨਿਆਵੀ ਕਾਰ-ਵਿਹਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਦਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਥੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਅਸੀਸ ਵੀ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਸਨ:

‘ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਣੁ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਪੀਵਹੁ’

ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸੁਆਉਣ ਲਗਿਆਂ ਮਾਂ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਸ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਸੀ।

“ਨਿਮਖ ਨ ਬਿਸਰਉ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਭਜਹੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ਼”

ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਲੋਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਸਾਂ ਉਹ ਬੇਹੂਦਾ ਗਾਣੇ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਚਰਿਤਰਹੀਨ, ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਤੇ ਡਰਪੋਕ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਗਾਇਕ ਦੀ ਲੋਰੀ ਘਰ ਘਰ ਗਾਈ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ —

“ਸੈਂ ਜਾ, ਬਬੂਆ, ਮਾਣੇ ਬਿੱਲੀ ਆਈ ਏ”।

ਜ਼ਰਾ ਝਾਤੀ ਮਾਰੀਏ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਡਰਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ—ਸੈਂ ਜਾਂ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਨਲੂਆ ਆ ਜਾਏਗਾ। ਅੱਜ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਆਉਣ ਲਗਿਆਂ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ—ਸੈਂ ਜਾ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਬਿੱਲੀ ਆ ਜਾਏਗੀ। ਕਿਥੇ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਕਿਥੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਏ — ਵਿਚਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਕੋਈ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੀ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਠ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਜ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ‘ਘਰ ਕੀ ਗੀਹਨ ਚੰਗੀ’ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਚਿਤਰ ਖਿਚਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਮਾਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੁੱਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਧਾਣੀਆਂ ਪਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਬੱਚਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਸੁੱਤਾ ਉਠਦਾ ਸੀ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕੰਨੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਤੁਕ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਅੱਜ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੇ ਉਠਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਗਾਣੇ ਲੱਗ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਬੱਚੇ ਦੇ ਕੰਨ ਉਠਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਗਾਣੇ ਸੁਣਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਭਰਦੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਦੇਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਅਚੇਤ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਸਰਦਾਇਕ ਤੇ ਸਥਿਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਉਠਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਮਨ ਆਲਸ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਅਚੇਤ ਮਨ ਆਪਣਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਤੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤਕ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸੇ ਰਾਤੀ ਸੌਣ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਜਾਗਣ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਹਨ, ਜਦੋਂ ਚੇਤਨ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਬਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਲਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਭੀ ਉਪਜ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਧਰਤੀ, ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ, ਪਾਣੀ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਉਪਜ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੇਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਜੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਰਾਤੀਂ ਸੌਣ ਲਗਿਆਂ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸੇ ਇਹ ਦੋ ਵੇਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹਨ, ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲਣਾ ਹੈ। ਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਦੇ ਰਾਵਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਕੇਵਲ ਤੇ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਾਂ-ਬਾਪ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵੇਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਮਾਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕੱਲੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਬਾਪ ਦੀ ਗੈਰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਟਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਦਿਤੀ, ਕਿ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਨ ਸਖਸ਼ੀਅਤਾਂ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜੀਆਂ। ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿ ਇਕ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਿਰਤੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਈ ਦਯਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਜਰ ਗਿਆ, ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਨੇ ਆਪੇ ਬਾਪ-ਵਿਹੁਣੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਦਾ

ਪਾਲਣ-ਪੋਸਣ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ, ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ-ਉਲ-ਕੌਮ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਹਲੂਵਾਲੀਆ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜਿਆ। ਮਹਾਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਚੋਨ ਦਾ ਸਾਹ ਨਾ ਲਿਆ, ਜਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਤਕ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖ ਲਿਆ। ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੱਸਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਨਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਚੱਲਣ ਦੀ।

ਅਗਲਾ ਕੁਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਜੋ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਹੈ, ਟੀ.ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਦਾ, ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਫੈਸ਼ਨਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਦਾ। ਅੱਜ ਟੀ.ਵੀ. ਕਲਚਰ ਦਾ ਯੁੱਗ ਹੈ। ਬੱਚੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਤੇ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਐਡਵਾਂਸ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਚੱਕਰ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਬੇਮੁੱਖ ਹੋ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪੱਛਮੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੇਠ ਪਤਿਤਪੁਣਾ ਵਧ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਉਪਰ ਫਿਲਮੀ ਸਿਤਾਰੇ ਭੰਦੇ ਨਾਚ ਨਚਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਾਮ ਵਾਸਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਕਸਾ, ਤੇ ਅਸਲੀਲਤਾ ਦੀ ਡੂੰਘੀ ਖੱਡ ਵਿਚ ਡੋਗ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲਣਾ ਐਥਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਇਕਬਾਲ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਲਿਖਦੇ ਹਨ—

“ਕੌਮਾਂ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ

ਤੇ ਬਣਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਤੇ ਨਾਚ ਗਾਣਿਆਂ

ਦੀ ਮਜਲਸ ਵਿਚ ਖਰਮ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।”

ਫਿਕਰਮੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਮਹਿੰਗੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਚ ਗਾਣਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਗੁਆ ਰਹੇ? ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਯੁੱਗ ਵਿਚ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਵਲੋਂ ਮੋੜਨਾ ਇਕ ਕਠਿਨ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ। ਬੱਚੇ ਸਰੂਲ ਕਾਲਜ ਜਾਣ ਲਗਿਆਂ ਰਾਤੀ ਦੇਖੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਸਬਕ ਵਾਂਗ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਦੀ ਹਾਸੇਹੀਟੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨਾ ਬਣ ਜਾਵੇ। ਏਨਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਬੜੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਵੀ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਘਟਨਾ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਨੁਕਤਾ ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਰਿਵੀਊ ਤਾਂ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਲੇਬਸ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮੌਕਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਨਾ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਪਛੜਿਆ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਇਸ ਬੰਨ੍ਹੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੋੜਨਾ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਸਮਸਿਆ ਦਾ ਹੱਲ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਏ? ਮੇਰੀ ਸਮਝ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਅੱਜ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਸੋਝੀ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਣ। ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਈ ਸਫਲ ਤਜਰਬੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਏਥੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਵੇਟ ਚੈਨਲ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਸਿੱਖ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਟੀ. ਵੀ. ਤੇ ਦਿਖਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਕਬੂਲਣਗੇ। ਪਰੰਤੂ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਏ, ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਹੋਏਗੀ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਜਾਣੇ ਅਣਜਾਣੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਨਾਲ ਖਿਲਵਾੜ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਨਾਵਾਕਫ਼ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਵਿਉਂਪਾਰਕ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਗ ਪੈਣਗੇ। ਸੋ ਬੜਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਕੇ ਚਲਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ।

ਇਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਹੋਰ ਲਿਟਰੇਚਰ ਛਾਪਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੁਛ ਕੁ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਵਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਅਜੇ ਹੋਰ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਕ੍ਰਾਂਤੀਕਾਰੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਲਿਆਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਨਾਵਲ ‘ਸੁੰਦਰੀ’ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਚਿਲਮਾਂ ਪੀਂਦਾ, ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਅਦਬੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਧਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ‘ਸਤਵੰਤ ਕੌਰ’ ਨੇ ਕਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਆ। ਸੋ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣੀਕ ਲਿਟਰੇਚਰ ਛਾਪਣ ਦੀ ਫੈਰੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਬੇਰੁਖੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਕਾਰਨ ਅਮਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਹੋ ਹੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ

ਬਹੁਤ ਹੋ ਵੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਕੇਵਲ 'ਰੋਟੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਤਾਲ' ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਮਨੁਖ ਹੋਰ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਹੜਾ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਲੋਕਚਰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੋਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਕੰਮ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਸੁਆਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਹੋ। ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ। ਜੇ ਥੋੜ੍ਹੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ। ਨਤੀਜੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਹ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਪਖੰਡ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਗ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਮਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਉਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਉਪਰਾਮ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ, ਰਹਿਤ ਬਹਿਤ ਵਿਚ ਪਕੇ ਅਮਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਟੀ ਦੇ ਮਸਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਚਿੰਤਾ-ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਏਗਾ। ਚੰਗਾ ਜੀਵਨ-ਪੱਧਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਪਏਗਾ। ਦੂਸਰੇ, ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਪ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਤਰਨਾ ਪਏਗਾ। ਜਿਤਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਤਕ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਦੇ, ਧਰਮੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਪਣਾਉਂਦੇ, ਨਾਮ-ਰਸੀਏ-ਸਿਮਰਨ ਅਭਿਆਸੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਦੇ, ਉਤਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਗੱਲ ਬਣਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸੋ ਆਉ! ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਤੋਂ ਆਰੰਭੀਏ। ਨਮੂਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀਆਂ ਘੜਨ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਮਾਡਲ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰੀਏ। ਫਿਰ ਸਾਡਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਹੀ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣੇਗਾ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੈਲਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੇਠ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੈਲਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੇਠ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਇਆ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਕਰੇਧੀ, ਘੱਟ ਬੇਈਮਾਨ, ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਤੇ ਕਮੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਹੱਥ ਫੇਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਜੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਬਖਸ਼ਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਲੋਕਚਰ ਐਸਾ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ-ਆਪਣੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਬਲੇ ਸੋਟਾ ਫੇਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਤੇ ਉਂਗਲ ਉਠਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਝਾਤੀ ਮਾਰੀਏ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਉਸਾਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਰੇਦਾਰ ਬਾਪਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਨੇ ਹੀ ਚੇਤਨ ਪਹਿਰੇਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਆਉ! ਵੇਲਾਂ ਸੰਭਾਲੀਏ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਕਿਉਂ?

ਅਰਦਮਨ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਅੱਜ ਕਲ ਕਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਘਰਾਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਬੱਬ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ-ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਰ ਪੰਜ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਦੁਰੇਡੇ ਆ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਏ ਪੂਰਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਮੱਧਮ ਇਸ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਸਤੂ ਤੋਂ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਈਏ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਘੱਟ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਆਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਓਨਾ ਹੀ ਘੱਟ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਾਡੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਵਸਤੂ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਮੁਲ ਘੱਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਲੋੜ ਇਹ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਵਸਤੂ ਦੀ ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਰਹੇ।

ਦੂਜਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਚੁਕ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖੀ-ਆਸ਼ੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿਸਦੇ, ਅਜਿਹੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਤਰੇਕ਼ਾਂ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਡੇ-ਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਓਪਰਾ ਓਪਰਾ, "ਮਨ ਹੋਰ, ਮੁਖ ਹੋਰ" ਵਾਲਾ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਵਾਕਫੀ ਵਾਲਾ, ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਲੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਂ ਰਹੇ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਹੁਲਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ। ਉਹ ਜਾਣੇ ਅਣਜਾਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਮੂੰਹ ਮੋੜੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਸਮਾਂ ਵੀ ਬਦਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਉਪਰਲੀਆਂ ਉਪਰਲੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ, ਰਸਮਾਂ, ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ, ਜੋ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਅਰਥ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਲਗਦੇ ਹਨ, ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਤੀਜਦਾ। ਕੋਈ ਅਨਹੋਣੀ, ਜਾਦੂ ਵਾਂਗ ਵਾਪਰੀ ਘਟਨਾ, ਜਿਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਦਲੀਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ, ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਨਿਰੁਤਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ, ਤਦ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਦਲੀਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਤਰਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਮਝ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣ ਲਈ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਦਿਸਦੇ ਦਾ ਕਾਇਲ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਮਿਥਿਹਾਸਿਕ ਗਾਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਥੀਤੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਨਦਾ। ਉਹ ਚੰਦਰਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੂਜਦਾ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਚੰਦਰਮਾ ਤਕ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਵੇਖ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਝੁਕਾਉ ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਲੀਡਰ ਜਾਂ ਵਡੇ ਵਡੇਰੇ ਐਨਾ ਸਾਹਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੇ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ, ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਵਡਮੁਲੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਠੀਕ ਸੋਧ ਦੇਣ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਇਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਹੈ, ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਿਤਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਭਿਅਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਰੀਰਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਨਿਯਮ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਲਈ ਵੀ। ਇਹ ਸਾਦਾ, ਦਲੀਲ-ਪੂਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਅਟੱਲ ਸਚਾਈਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ-ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ-ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਲਗ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੱਜਣ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਮਨਮੋਹਣਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਦਸਣ ਵਿਚ। ਦੇ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਇਕ ਬੜਾ ਲੰਮਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਐਨੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਚਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤੇ ਜੋ

* ਤਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਬਾਗੜੀਆਂ, ਫ਼ਿਲਾ ਸੰਗਰੂਰ, ਪੰਜਾਬ।

ਯੋਗ ਵੰਗ ਦਾ, ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲਾ, ਤਕੜੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ਬਲ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ।

ਇਹ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਚਹਿਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੀਲ ਹੁਜ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸੱਚ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੋੜਤਾ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ।

ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਵੀ ਗੁਰ-ਸਿਖ ਉਥਲਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਡੋਲ ਬੈਠ ਸਕਦੇ ਸਨ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਦਾ ਬੰਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਟਵਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸਨ, ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟਣ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਖੋਪਰੀ ਲੁਹਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ। ਇਹ ਸਭ ਪੂਰਨ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਠ ਦੀ ਟੋਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ, ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਕਰ ਵਿਚ।

ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਿਖ ਵੀ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਣਗੇ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਜਾਏ ਪੁਤਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਵਿਚ ਸਸਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿਆਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ-ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਅਥਰੂ ਵਹਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਅਡੋਲ ਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ, ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਠਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੰਨਦਿਆਂ।

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਰਾਜ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿਖ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਸਖਤ ਕੈਦਾਂ ਡੁਗਤਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਾਸੂਮ ਬਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਵੇਖ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਟੋਟਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਾਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਗਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਏ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਇਕ ਵੀ ਅਥਰੂ ਕੇਰੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਰਜ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ।

ਇਹ ਸੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਐਨਾ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਬਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਝਲਕਾਂ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਦ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਬਣਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਸਨ।

ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਉੱਤੇ ਉੱਤਰ-ਪੱਛਮ ਵਲੋਂ ਧਾਵੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਤਨਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾ ਸਕਿਆ। ਧਾੜਵੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਦੌਲਤ ਲੁੱਟ ਕੇ, ਏਥੋਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਧੀਆਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਚੁਕ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਦੌਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਇਜ਼ਤ ਬਚਾ ਸਕਣ। ਇਹ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਹੀ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਧਾੜਵੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਕੇ, ਲੁਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਦੌਲਤ ਅਤੇ ਧੀਆਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰੀਂ ਪੁਚਾਉਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਗੋਂ ਲਈ ਧਾੜਵੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਿਆ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਲ ਮੂੰਹ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ। ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ: "ਇਹ ਸਗ (ਜੋ ਫਾਰਸੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਵਿਚ "ਸਿੰਘ" ਲਫਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਕੇ ਬਣਿਆ ਲਫਜ਼ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ "ਕੁੱਤ") ਕਿਸੇ ਧਨ ਦੌਲਤ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੀਵੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਚਸਕਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਵੇਖਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੱਕੋ।।" ਇਹ ਹੈ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਵੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਉਚ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ, ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਪਵਿਤਰਤਾ, ਮਨ ਦੀ ਅਡੋਲਤਾ, ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਮਿਲੀ ਸੀ।

ਇਕ ਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤਕ ਦਸਾਂ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਲਈ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਤਮਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਲਈ ਝੁੰਘੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਗੇ ਸਿਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਝੁਕਾਉਂਦਾ।

ਮਨੁਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਲੋਖਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕਰਦੀ ਅਜ ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਜੀ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁਖ ਜੀਵਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪੱਥਰ ਯੁਗ, ਫਿਰ ਲੋਹ (ਧਾਤ) ਯੁਗ, ਆਦਿ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਦਾ ਹੋਲੀ ਹੋਲੀ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪਸ਼ੂ ਸਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਇਕ ਸੋਭਨੀਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਪੁੱਜਾ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਮੁੜ ਕੇ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਸਮਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਲ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਵਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾ ਸਕਦਾ। ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਹੀ ਵਧਣਾ, ਫੁਲਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਇਸੇ ਗਲ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਵਰਮਾਨ ਹੈ "ਭਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ। ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਇਹੋ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥" ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਦੇ ਪਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁਖ ਜੀਵਨ ਉਹ ਉਚ ਪੱਧਰ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰਲੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਇਕਸਿਕ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਠੀਕ ਸਮਝ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸੋਚੀ ਸੋਧ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦਸਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਕਲਨ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਦਿਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਲਭਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨੀਯਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਪਾਠ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਹੋਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆਨ ਪੂਰਾ ਗੁਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਅੱਧੀ ਸਚਾਈ ਹੀ ਪੱਲੇ ਪਵੇ। ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਥਾਜ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਸਿਖਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਾਇਜ਼ ਲਾਭ ਉਠਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਲਈ, ਸਿਧਾ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆਨ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਤੋਖ-ਜਨਕ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਬੋਝੀ ਕੁ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਵਾਚਣ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ, ਇਸ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਗਮਜ਼ਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਸੁਨੇਹਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਸਮਝ ਆ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਚੰਗੇ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਪੂਜ ਗਰੰਥ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਮੋਹਰਬੰਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਅਸਲੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਾਵਟ ਦੀ ਗੁੰਜਾਇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਹ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਸਿਖ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਅਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੁ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਖੁਦ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਗਰੰਥੀ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ ਦਾ ਮੁਥਾਜ ਨਾ ਰਹੇ।

ਕਈ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਐਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਿਰਫ ਮਨ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਇਕੱਠੇ ਰਲ ਕੇ, ਗਰੁਪ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ, ਉਦਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਵਡੇ-ਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀਆਂ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ, ਐਤਵਾਰ ਕਲਾਸਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ, ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਮੰਤਵ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਜਥੇਬੰਦ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਮਿਥ ਕੇ ਉਦਮ ਕੀਤਿਆਂ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਟੀਕੇ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਰਲਵੇਂ ਉਦਮ ਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਚਲਾ ਦੇਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਵਧ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਹਰ ਗਿਲੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਤੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੋਝੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆ ਸਕੇਗੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਸ ਵਿਖੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਐਡੀ ਉਚੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਦਰ ਭਾਵ ਨਾਲ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਛੱਡ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਦ ਤਕ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਵਸੀਲਾ

ਜਾਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਸਮਝ ਸਕੀਏ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਦਲੀਲਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕਿਤਨੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਫ਼ ਸਮਝ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਾਏ ਤਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੈ।

ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੋਟੇ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੈ ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਉਤੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਰਖਣੀ। ਸਿਖ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਵੀ, ਦੇਵਤੇ, ਮਝੀ, ਮਸਾਣ, ਭੂਤਾਂ, ਪ੍ਰੇਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖੇਗਾ।

ਕਈ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਪੁਛਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਰੱਬ ਕਿਥੇ ਹੈ, ਕਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ? ਉਹ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਜਾਣ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੁੱਟਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਘੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਧੀਰਜ ਲਾਲ ਵਿਚਾਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਦਾ ਘੇਰਾ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ 38,400 ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ ਹੈ। ਕਿੰਨਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਭੱਟ ਵਾਲੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਕੱਠ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਨਿਕਾ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਗ੍ਰਹ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡਾ ਸੂਰਜ ਧਰਤੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਘੁੰਮਦੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਇਕੱਠ ਇਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਦਾ ਨਿਗੁਣਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਹਿਸਾ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਅਣਗਿਣਤ ਸੂਰਜ, ਗ੍ਰਹ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਰੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਬੇਓੜਕ ਦੇ ਹਨ। ਹੁਣ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀ ਈਸ਼ਵਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਇਕ ਨਹੀਂ, ਕਈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਹਨ। ਐਨੀ ਨਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਰਚਨਾ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਅਕਲ ਦੰਗ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਭ ਸੂਰਜ, ਗ੍ਰਹ, ਸਤਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਤ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਤੌਰ ਨਾਲ ਚਲ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਿਸ ਨੇ ਬਣਾਈ? ਕੌਣ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਚਲਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਰਖ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ? ਉਸ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉਹੀ ਰੱਬ ਹੈ, ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ, ਰੰਗ, ਚਕਰ-ਚਿਹਨ ਦੱਸ ਸਕਣਾ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉਪਰ ਹੈ।

ਹਰ ਸਿਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਅਪਾਰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ-ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਨਾਲ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਪਲ, ਹਰ ਛਿਣ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ (ਸਿਮਰਨ) ਵਿਚ ਲਗਣਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਦੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਜੀਵਨ-ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਦਾ ਸੋਮਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖਣ, ਮਿਲਣ ਲਈ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ "ਜਪੁਜੀ" (ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਰੋਜ਼ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਿਖ ਦਾ ਨਿਤਨੇਮ ਹੈ) ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਅਪਾਰ ਰਚਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਬਾਰੇ, ਉਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਪਿਆਰ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਇੰਸ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਮਨ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਅੰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਕਰਦੀ, ਪੱਸਰਦੀ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਹੋਲੀ ਹੋਲੀ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਪੜਾਅ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਲ ਇਹ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਤੁਰੀ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਟਾਵੇਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਵੇਖਣ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤਕ ਬੇੜਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਪੁਜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਸਾਡੇ ਪੈਗੰਬਰ, ਅਵਤਾਰ, ਗੁਰੂ ਇਸੇ ਸ਼ਰੇਣੀ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਪੁਰਸ਼ ਹਨ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ, ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰੀ ਕਾਇਨਾਤ, ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ, ਇਸ

ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਸਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਮਤਲਬ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਚੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ, ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਸਮਝਣੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਚ, ਸਮਝ, ਕਹਿਣੀ, ਕਰਨੀ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੋਝਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਉ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਆਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਕਰੀਏ, ਜਾਂ ਭੀਗਾਂ ਮਾਰੀਏ ਜਾਂ ਫੋਕਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਛਾਂਟੀਏ-ਉਹਨਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਮਝ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹਨ।

ਸਿਖ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਜਿਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਭਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਓੜਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਸਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਈਸ਼ਵਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਮਾਤਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਹ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਕਿ "ਮੈਂ ਐਹ ਕੀਤਾ", "ਸਿਰਫ ਮੈਂ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ" ਆਦਿ। ਅਜਿਹੀ "ਮੈਂ", ਦੇ ਗੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋੜ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਹ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਪਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਮਰ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿਖਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਥੀਂ ਦਿਆਨਤਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਰਤ-ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰੋ, ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੁਟ ਖਸੂਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੋ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੋੜਵੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡੋ, ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਦੌੜ ਨਾ ਜਾਉ, "ਮਨ ਹੋਰ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਖ ਹੋਰ" ਵਾਲਾ ਧੋਖੇਮਈ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾ ਜੀਵੋ, ਅਜਿਹਾ ਖਾਣਾ, ਪਹਿਨਣਾ, ਅਜਿਹੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਪੀੜਤ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਖਰਾਬ ਹੋਵੇ, ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ। ਇਹ ਹੈ ਦਲੀਲ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਚ-ਨੀਚ, ਅਮੀਰੀ-ਗਰੀਬੀ ਦਾ ਭਿੰਨ-ਭੇਦ ਲਾਂਭੇ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਨੌਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦਰਸਾਈ, ਇਸ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ ਸਮਾਜਵਾਦ ਕੋਈ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਉਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿਮਾਲਿਆ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਟੀਆਂ ਤਕ, ਪਛਮ ਵਲ ਮੱਕਾ ਤੇ ਬਗਦਾਦ, ਪੂਰਬ ਵਿਚ ਧੁਰ ਆਸਾਮ ਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲੰਕਾ ਤਕ ਪੈਦਲ ਵਿਚਰੇ, ਭੁਲੀ ਭਟਕੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਵਲ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ।

ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ, ਮਰਦਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੀਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ, ਲੰਗਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ (ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ, ਉੱਚ ਨੀਚ ਦੇ ਭਗਮ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਪੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ), ਦੁਸ਼ਟਤਾ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਂਤਮਈ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੇ ਇਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਗਿਲੇ ਨਾ ਹਟੇ ਤਾਂ ਤਾਕਤ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਉਣਾ ਇਹ ਹਨ- ਸਿਖ ਜੀਵਨ-ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਅੰਗ। ਸਿਖ ਰੱਬ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਡਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਡਰਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਪਵਿਤਰ, ਨਿਡਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਸਾਵਾਂਪਣ, ਈਰਖਾ, ਨਫਰਤ, ਮਨ ਦੀ ਅਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਹੋ ਕੁਝ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ ਕਈ ਥਾਈਂ ਵੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ।

ਸਿਖ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਵੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਦਾਤ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰਖਣਾ, ਸਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਫ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਕੰਘਾ, ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦਾ ਕੜਾ ਬਾਂਹ ਦੁਆਲੇ, ਤੇੜ ਕਛਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਗਾਤਰੇ ਨਾਲ

ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣਾ—ਇਹ ਪੰਜ ਰਹਿਤਾਂ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ "ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰ" ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਹਰ ਸਿਖ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੁਰ-ਸਿਖ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਹੈ।

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਯਮਤ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਫੌਜੀ ਅਫਸਰ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ, ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਿਯਮਤ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਜੇ ਸਿਖ ਦਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੰਕਾ ਜਾਂ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਕੁਝ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸੋਚਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਮੱਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਹਿ ਭੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿਰ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਰਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਬਹਾਨਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਸ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਬੰਦਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਭਜਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਘਾਲਣਾਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਘਾਲਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਖ ਅਰਾਮ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਿਖ ਹਨ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਧਾਰਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਸੋਹਣੀਆਂ ਪਗੜੀਆਂ ਸ਼ੋਭਦੀਆਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਭਾਗ ਹੀ ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਰਸ਼ਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਦਾਤ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਵੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਖੁੱਲੀ ਵਾਲੇ, ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਚ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਬੜੇ ਧਨਵਾਨ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਰਕਤ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਤਾਜ਼-ਮਨੁੱਖ—ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਲੰਮੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਨੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਕਾਫੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਖੋਜ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਚੁਕੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਿਰੇ ਤਕ ਪੂਰੀ ਲੰਮਾਈ ਜੀਵਤ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਉਂਗਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇ ਵਧੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸੁਕੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਖੋਜ਼ਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਰਸਾਇਣ, ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਬਨਾਵਟ, ਤਾਕਤ ਅਤੇ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨੇਕ ਭੁਕਾਅ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਬੜਾ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਾਂ ਕਟਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਲੰਮਾਈ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਅਗੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਧਣਗੇ। ਪਰ ਜੇ ਕਟਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਉਗਰੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਕੱਟੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਈ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਧ ਖੁਰਾਕ (ਪ੍ਰੋਟੀਨ) ਸਰੀਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਖਰਚ ਕਰਨਗੇ। ਵੈਸੇ ਵੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਭੰਨਣਾ ਈਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਅਪਮਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ੇਰ ਅਤੇ ਬੱਬਰ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਲਵੋ। ਬੱਬਰ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਨਲੋੜੀਏ ਕਹਿ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਕਦੇ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੱਟ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣ?

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਜਿਸ ਵਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਟਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਵੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਅਧੋਗਤੀ ਵਲ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਨੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਸੌੜੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਹਤ ਦਾ ਮਿਆਰ ਅਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਖਲਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਇਹ ਸੋਚੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਵੇਗੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਨੋਸੀ

ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਸਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਮਤਲਬ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਸਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਚੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਦੀ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪਸ਼ੂ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ, ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਸਮਝਣੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ। ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੋਚ, ਸਮਝ, ਕਹਿਣੀ, ਕਰਨੀ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਉੱਪਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਚਿਰ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਚੇਤਨਤਾ ਤਕ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੋਝਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਉਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਿਆਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਕਰੀਏ, ਜਾਂ ਭੀਗਾਂ ਮਾਰੀਏ ਜਾਂ ਫੋਕਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਛਾਟੀਏ-ਉਹਨਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਮਝ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹਨ।

ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨ ਨਿਮਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਜਿਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਭਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਓੜਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਸਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਈਸ਼ਵਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਤਿਨਕਾ ਮਾਤਰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਹ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਕਿ "ਮੈਂ ਐਹ ਕੀਤਾ", "ਸਿਰਫ ਮੈਂ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ" ਆਦਿ। ਅਜਿਹੀ "ਮੈਂ", ਦੇ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਉਹ ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋੜ ਸਕਦਾ। ਉਹ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਪਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਰੱਬ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਮਰ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿਖਾਇਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਥੀਂ ਦਿਆਨਤਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਰਤ-ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰੋ, ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੁਟ ਖਸੂਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੋ, ਸਗੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਲੋੜਵੰਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡੋ, ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਦੌੜ ਨਾ ਜਾਓ, "ਮਨ ਹੋਰ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਹੋਰ" ਵਾਲਾ ਧੋਖਮਈ ਜੀਵਨ ਨਾ ਜੀਵੋ, ਅਜਿਹਾ ਖਾਣਾ, ਪਹਿਨਣਾ, ਅਜਿਹੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਪੀੜਤ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਖਰਾਬ ਹੋਵੇ, ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਣ। ਇਹ ਹੈ ਦਲੀਲ-ਭਰਪੂਰ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਚੂਚ-ਨੀਚ, ਅਮੀਰੀ-ਗਰੀਬੀ ਦਾ ਭਿੰਨ-ਭੇਦ ਲਾਂਭੇ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਨੌਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦਰਸਾਈ, ਇਸ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਚੰਗੇਰਾ ਸਮਾਜਵਾਦ ਕੋਈ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਉਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹਿਮਾਲਿਆ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਟੀਆਂ ਤਕ, ਪਛਮ ਵਲ ਮੱਕਾ ਤੇ ਬਗਦਾਦ, ਪੂਰਬ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰ ਆਸਾਮ ਤਕ ਅਤੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲੰਕਾ ਤਕ ਪੈਦਲ ਵਿਚਰੇ, ਭੁਲੀ ਭਟਕੀ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਜੀਵਨ-ਜਾਚ ਵਲ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ।

ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ, ਮਰਦਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੀਵੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਰਾਬਰਤਾ, ਲੰਗਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ (ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜਾਤ ਪਾਤ, ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਦੇ ਭਰਮ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਪੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ), ਦੁਸ਼ਟਤਾ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਂਤਮਈ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਅਤੇ ਜੋ ਇਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੀਲੇ ਨਾ ਹਟੇ ਤਾਂ ਤਾਕਤ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਕਾਉਣਾ ਇਹ ਹਨ- ਸਿਖ ਜੀਵਨ-ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਅੰਗ। ਸਿਖ ਰੱਬ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਡਰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਡਰਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਪਵਿਤਰ, ਨਿਡਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਅਨੁਸਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਸਾਵਾਂਪਣ, ਈਰਖਾ, ਨਫਰਤ, ਮਨ ਦੀ ਅਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਹੋ ਕੁਝ ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ ਕਈ ਥਾਈਂ ਵੇਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ।

ਸਿਖ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਲਈ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਵੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਦਾਤ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰਖਣਾ, ਸਿਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਫ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਕੰਘਾ, ਸਰਬ ਲੋਹ ਦਾ ਕੜਾ ਬਾਂਹ ਦੁਆਲੇ, ਤੇੜ ਕਛਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਗਲ ਵਿਚ ਗਾਤਰੇ ਨਾਲ

ਕਿਰਪਾਨ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣਾ—ਇਹ ਪੰਜ ਰਹਿਤਾਂ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ "ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰ" ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੁਰ-ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਹੈ।

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਯਮਤ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ ਜਾਂ ਫੌਜੀ ਅਫਸਰ ਨੁਕਤਾਚੀਨੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ, ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਿਯਮਤ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਕਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਕਾ ਜਾਂ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਕੁਝ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਸੋਚਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਮੱਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਸ਼ਹਿ ਭੀ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿਰ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਰਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਕਈ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਬਹਾਨਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਸ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਬੰਦਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਭਜਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਕਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਘਾਲਣਾਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਘਾਲਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਖ ਅਰਾਮ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਨ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਧਾਰਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਸੋਹਣੀਆਂ ਪਗੜੀਆਂ ਸੋਭਦੀਆਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਭਾਗ ਹੀ ਬਣੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਦਾ ਮਾਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਰਸ਼ਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਦਾਤ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਵੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਮਾਲ ਦੀ ਖੁੱਧੀ ਵਾਲੇ, ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਚ ਪਦਵੀਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਬੜੇ ਧਨਵਾਨ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਦਾੜੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ, ਸਗੋਂ ਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਬਰਕਤ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਧਰਤੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਸਾਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਤਾਜ਼-ਮਨੁੱਖ—ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਲੰਮੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵਡਾ ਇਮਾਮ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਨੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਕਾਫੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਖੋਜ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਜੜ੍ਹ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਿਰੇ ਤਕ ਪੂਰੀ ਲੰਮਾਈ ਜੀਵਤ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਉਂਗਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇ ਵਧੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸੁਕੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਬੇਜ਼ਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਰੀਰ ਦੀ ਰਸਾਇਣ, ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੀ ਬਨਾਵਟ, ਤਾਕਤ ਅਤੇ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਨੇਕ ਝੁਕਾਅ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਬੜਾ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕੇਸ ਨਾਂ ਕਟਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਲੰਮਾਈ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਅਗੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਧਣਗੇ। ਪਰ ਜੇ ਕਟਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਉਂਗਲੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਕੱਟੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕਈ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਵਧ ਖੁਰਾਕ (ਪ੍ਰੋਟੀਨ) ਸਰੀਰ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਖਰਚ ਕਰਨਗੇ। ਵੈਸੇ ਵੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦੀ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਭੰਨਣਾ ਈਮਾਨਦਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਅਪਮਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਸੋਰ ਅਤੇ ਬੱਬਰ ਸੋਰ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਖ ਲਵੋ। ਬੱਬਰ ਸੋਰ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਅਨਲੋੜੀਏ ਕਹਿ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਕਦੇ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕੱਟ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣ?

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਜਿਸ ਵਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਟਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਵੀ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਜਾਤੀ ਅਧੋਗਤੀ ਵਲ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਨੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਸੌੜੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਮਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਹਤ ਦਾ ਮਿਆਰ ਅਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਖਲਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਇਹ ਸੋਚੀ ਮਨੁੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਵੇਗੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਨੋਸੀ

ਥਾਰੇ ਆਈ ਹੈ। ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਸੇਵਨ ਜੋ ਕਦੇ ਫੈਸਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਹੁਣ ਸਿਹਤ ਲਈ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸਿਖ ਮਰਿਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਦਾ ਵਰਤਣਾ ਅਜ ਤੋਂ ਕਈ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਨ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਤੰਬਾਕੂ ਦਾ ਸੇਵਨ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਨੀਯਤ ਚਾਰ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਹੈ। ਬਾਕੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਹਨ—ਸਰੀਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਹਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੇਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੱਟਣੇ, ਪਰ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਗਮਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਕੱਟਿਆ ਮਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਾਣਾ। ਕੇਸਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਨਿਯਮ ਚਾਰ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇਹਾਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਣਾ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਜਾਂ ਪੁਰਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਇਕਰਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮੰਨਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਖੇਧੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਉਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੀ, ਸੁਚੀ ਅਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਤਰੀ ਸਾਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੈ, ਹਰ ਪਲ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਯਾਦ ਮਸ਼ੀਨ ਵਾਂਗ, ਤੇਤੇ ਵਾਂਗ, ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਰੱਟ ਲਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਪੂਰਨ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਭਰੇ ਦਿਲ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਯਾਦ। ਇਸ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਰੋ ਉਠਦੀ, ਅਨੰਦ ਦੇ ਰੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਰੰਗੀ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਲੀਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਉਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਰਹਿਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਅਖੌਤੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਬਣੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਛਲੱਗ (ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ) ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਹਬਰ ਕੁਝ ਯੋਗਾ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਮਾਨਸਕ ਸੱਤਾ (ਮਨੋਯੋਗ) ਜਾਂ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਉਚੇਰੀ ਆਤਮਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਭ ਖਾਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਲਈ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਲੀ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸੱਚੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈ ਸਕਦੇ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮਾਰਗ ਵਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ। ਉਹ ਪਛਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਗਲਤ ਜਾਂ ਠੀਕ ਕੰਮ ਅਤੇ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਕ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਵਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਬੱਝਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਸੁਭਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਹੈ—ਕਿਸੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦਾ, ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦਾ। ਉਹ ਟੱਬਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਲ ਕੇ, ਕਿਸੇ ਮੱਤ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵਰਤ ਕੇ, ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੇ ਭਰੋਸੇ ਜੀਉਂਦੇ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਲਭਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਸ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਘਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਨਾ ਉਹਦੀ ਜਨਮ ਥਾਂ, ਨਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਅਸੂਲ, ਨਾ ਸਾਕ ਸਬੰਧ, ਉਹ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਆਚਾ ਗੁਆਚਾ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਪਹੀਏ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਧੁਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਬੇਮੁਹਾਰਾ ਘੁੰਮੇਗਾ ਜਾਂ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਪਿਆ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਤਦ ਹੀ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਧੁਰੇ ਉਤੇ ਲਗ ਕੇ ਚਲਣ ਲਗ ਪਵੇ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੁਚੀ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਉਹ ਐਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਤੁਰਦੀ ਫਿਰਦੀ ਅਜਾਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਗਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ, ਇਕ ਧਰਮ ਚੁਣਦਾ ਹੈ, ਇਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਸਭਿਅਤਾ, ਇਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਜੀਵਨ-ਰਾਹ, ਇਕ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ, ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਕੇ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੋ ਖੇਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਰ ਰਖਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨੀ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਕ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ

ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਠੀਕ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾ ਨਿਭਾਈਏ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਕਹਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਏ, ਇਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਸਿਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੁਚਾਏਗਾ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਰਸਾ ਬੜਾ ਸਰੋਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਨੀਯਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਲ ਹੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਰੀਏ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਹੱਥ ਜੋੜਕੇ, ਇਕ ਮਨ ਇਕ ਚਿਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਆਰੰਭ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ, ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਅਰੰਗ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦਾ, ਸੁਖ ਮੰਗਦਾ, ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ, ਮੱਤ ਉਚੀ ਲਈ ਚਿਤਵਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਲੇ ਬੁਰੇ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਿਵੇਕ ਬੁਧੀ ਲਈ ਅਰਜ਼ੋਈ ਕਰਦਾ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ, ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ। ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਅਮੀਰਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਮਰਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਜੇ ਸੱਚੇ ਦਿਲੋਂ, ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਸ਼ਟਤਾ, ਪੂਰਨ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਸੁਖ ਆਨੰਦ ਵੱਲ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਜਾਏਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਮੰਤਵ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ "ਅਰਦਾਸ" ਇਕ ਅਦਭੁਤ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ। ਕੁੱਝੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ। ਸੱਚਾ ਤੇ ਸੁਚਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਕੌਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਜਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੌਰਵ-ਮਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੋਂ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਉਸ ਦਰਜੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਤੀ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ, ਸਮਾਜਕ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਸਮੂਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਸਮੂਹ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਲਈ ਸੁਭ ਚਿਤਵਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਆਂ ਕਲਾਂ ਲਈ ਇੱਛਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਤ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ ਪਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਤਾਕਤ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾਨ, ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ, ਸਿਦਕ, ਭਰੋਸਾ, ਰਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭਿਅਤਾ ਦੇ ਸੋਮੇ ਤੋਂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤੀ ਵੇਖੋ। ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਤ ਉਚੀ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਤੇ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੋਣਾ। ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਹਿਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਐਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਾਚ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਤਤਪਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ? ਚੌਕੀਆਂ, ਝੰਡੇ-ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਟੱਲਤਾ ਮੰਗਣੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਬੇਬੀ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ, ਸਮਾਜਕ, ਮਨੋਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ, ਜ਼ਬੇਬੀ ਆਦਿ ਹਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਤਕੜਾਈ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਚਿਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਜੀਅ ਦੀਆਂ ਡੂੰਘਾਈਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਇਸ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ੁਭਚਿਤਾਵਨਾ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ-ਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ ਚਾਰ ਚੁਫੇਰੇ ਉਡ ਤੁਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਇਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੇ ਸਮੂਹਾ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਇਸ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸਦਕਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਜੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਖੀਰ ਤੇ ਦੇ ਕੁ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੋਗ। ਕਈ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਲੀਡਰ ਬਣੇ ਹਨ, ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਮਰਾਹ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਨੁਕਸ ਵੋਲਣ ਨਾਲ ਕਿਤਨਾ ਕੁ ਭਲਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਹੱਥਲਾ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਣਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਗਿਨਣਾਤਮਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਠੀਕ ਰਾਹ ਤੇ ਚਲਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਦੂਜਾ-ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮ ਇਕੋ ਜੇਹੇ ਹਨ ਤਦ ਤਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਕਿਉਂ? ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਪਤਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਇਥੇ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਚੰਗੇਰੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਲ

ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਕ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਜਿਸ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਮ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਵਿਚ ਪਲਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਹੁ ਰੀਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਕਫ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਜੀਉਣਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਸੌਖਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਚਾਚੇ, ਮਾਮੇ, ਤਾਏ, ਪਏ ਚੰਗੇ ਹੋਣ, ਪਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਤੇ ਪਿਆਰ ਹੋਰ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਰਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਛਾਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਸੁਖਾਵੀਂ ਹੈ।

ਸੋ ਆਉ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੋ, ਹੰਭਲਾ ਮਾਰੀਏ ਤੇ—

- (1) ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਰਹੀਏ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਜੀਅ ਵਿਚ ਸਦਾ ਤਾਜ਼ਾ ਰਖੀਏ।
- (2) ਜਪੁ ਜੀ, ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ, ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅਨੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਰਹਿਰਾਸ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ, ਦਸਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਵੱਯੇ ਤੇ ਸਬਦ, ਆਦਿ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਨਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ, ਮਨੋਬਲ ਤੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਸੁਧਤਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਰਖੀਏ। ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਬਾਨੀ ਯਾਦ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਵਧੀਆ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਤ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਲਈ ਬੜੀ ਨਰੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸੋਝੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।
- (3) ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਮਰਿਆਦਾ, ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਹਿਤ, ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰ ਕੁਰਹਿਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਹੇਜ਼ ਪੱਕੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰੀਏ।
- (4) ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਆਸ਼ੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣਾ, ਵੰਡ ਛਕਣਾ, ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨੀ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਦਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਾਈ ਰਖਣਾ, ਮਨ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ, ਮੱਤ ਉਚੀ ਦੀ ਚਿਤਵਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਭ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਠਾ ਵਰਤਾਉ ਰਖਣਾ ਤੇ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਚਾਅ ਆਪਣੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਨੇਮ ਬਣਾਈਏ।
- (5) ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਪਾਠ ਕਰੀਏ, ਵਿਚਾਰੀਏ ਤੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਅੱਗੇ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਬੁਧੀ ਲਈ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੀਏ ਕਿ ਚੰਗੇ ਮੰਦੇ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਸਦਾ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਬਣੀ ਰਹੇ।

APPENDIX

ੴ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹਿ

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਲਹਿਰ

ਸਮੂਹ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਸਾਰ 'ਮਿਥਿਆ' ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਧਰਤੀ ਧਰਮ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਲਈ 'ਧਰਮਸਾਲ' ਹੈ। 'ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀ' ਦੁਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਖਾਣ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ 'ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ' ਹੈ। 'ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ' ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ ਮਨੁਖੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ, ਉਚ-ਨੀਚ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। 'ਨਾਂ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ', ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਪਿਆਰ ਦਾ, ਨਾਮ ਦਾ। ਕਰਤੇ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰ (ਅਥਾਹ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ) ਹੈ। ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਪਾਲੇਣਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਗਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਨੁੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨਤਾ ਵਲ ਲਿਜਾਣਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਰਜਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਯਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਉਸਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ। ਏਹੀ ਸਿਖੀ ਮਾਰਗ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਲ ਹੈ - ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਪਦ। ਇਹ ਮਾਰਗ ਕਰਨੀ - ਪਰਧਾਨ ਹੈ। 'ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ' ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਤਾਹਿਤਿ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ — ਵਿਵਿਚ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ, ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ। ਇਹ ਧਰਮ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਤਮਕ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਅਨਿਖੜਵੇਂਪਨ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੀ-ਪੀਰੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੈ। ਆਦਰਸ਼ 'ਸੋਤ ਸਿਪਾਹੀ' ਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਪਿਆਰ ਵਿਚ ਲੀਨ, ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਜੁਟਿਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਦੀਨ ਤੇ ਸਚਾਈ ਦੀ ਰਖਿਆ ਹਿਤ ਜੁਧ ਲਈ ਤਤਪਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਅਜਿਹੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ। ਸਮਾਂ ਬੀਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਇਸਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਵਧਦੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਇਹ ਦਾਤ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ। ਸਾਡੇ ਉਪਰ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਵਿਰਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ 'ਬੇਗਮਪੁਰੇ' ਦੀ ਅਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੇ ਬਾਣਾ ਬਖਸ਼ਕੇ ਇਸ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਅਲਮਬਰਦਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਮਲੇਵਾ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਿਮਰ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਪਛਾਣੋ—

- ਆਪ ਸਿਖੀ ਰਹੁਰੀਤ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਬਣੋ।
- ਬਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਖੀ ਰਹੁਰੀਤ ਵਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰੋ।
- ਨਿਤਨੇਮ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰੋ।
- ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਰੋਜ਼ ਕਰੋ।
- ਤਮਾਕੂ, ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਆਦਿ ਨਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਰੋ।
- ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਲਈ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੋ।
- 'ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ' ਕਰੋ।
- ਸਿਖੀ ਰੂਪ 'ਸਾਬਤ ਸੂਰਤ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ' ਵਿਚ ਫਖਰ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰੋ।

ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਦਾਸ

1. ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਥੇਦਾਰ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕੇਸਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਾਹਿਬ।
2. ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਥੇਦਾਰ, ਤਖਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ।
3. ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਟੌਹੜਾ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ।
4. ਪਰਮਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨਾ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਦਿੱਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ।
5. ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਚੀਫ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ।
6. ਸਰਬਜੋਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਸੰਤ ਸਮਾਜ।
7. ਠਾਕੁਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਮੁਖੀ, ਦਮਦਮੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ, ਚੈਕ ਮਹਿਤਾ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ।
8. ਡਾਕਟਰ ਭੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ, ਇਨਸਟੀਚਿਊਟ ਆਫ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਟਡੀਜ਼, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ।
9. ਪ੍ਰਿ. ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ, ਚੀਫ ਆਰਗੇਨਾਈਜ਼ਰ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਟਡੀ ਸਰਕਲ।

ਜਾਰੀ ਕਰਤਾ: ਡਾ. ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਨਵੀਨਰ (ਸਟੀਅਰਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ)

ਨੋਟ: ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : —

1. ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ।
2. ਇਨਸਟੀਚਿਊਟ ਆਫ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਟਡੀਜ਼, 959, ਫੇਜ਼ 4, ਮੁਹਾਲੀ, ਫੋਨ 670570
3. ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਟਡੀ ਸਰਕਲ, ਮਾਡਲ ਟਾਊਨ ਐਕਸਟੈਨਸ਼ਨ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ।
